GREAT MEN IN ISRAEL

J. MAX WEIS

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Sketches from Rabbinic and Medieval Jewry

By

J. MAX WEIS, Rabbi

New York
BLOCH PUBLISHING COMPANY, Inc.
"The Jewish Book Concern"
1931

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Bloch Publishing Co., New York

Printed in the United States of America

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PREFACE

Jewish girls and boys have found it a rather easy task to obtain biographical sketches of the world's greatest men. Among these, however, they have not been able to find the names of Israel's great men. This material, excepting the characters of Biblical literature, has been a closed book for them. It is the author's hope that the character sketches embodied in this volume, will offer to our youth, as well as to all who are interested in the heroic lives of Rabbinic and Medieval Jewry, the realization that the days of Israel, though filled with tragedies, are also replete with joys, with triumphs and achievements.

These rabbinic and medieval characters personify many of the greatest contributions the Jew has made to civilization. As rabbis, philosophers, physicians and poets, they have accelerated mankind's attainment of its most precious truths and ideals. As merchants and financiers, they introduced a measure of stability in the affairs and relationships of nations. Their dissemination in the various countries of the ancient and medieval world, increased their opportunity for exchanging cultural treasures with all peoples. The records of these lives are records of glory and courage.

Since this book is also designed to meet the needs of our religious schools, a special historical supplement, with exact references, has been included for the convenience of the teacher.

The author desires to express his indebtedness to Solomon Berman's collection of Biographies, *Gibore Ha-uma* ("Heroes of the People") and to Graetz's "History of The Jews," for the many interesting facts and records from which many of these stories have been gleaned and developed.

J. MAX WEIS.

New York City.
October, 1922.

GREAT MEN IN ISRAEL

THE LOST JEWEL

It was a week before Rosh Hashanah, the New Year festival, and the Temple at Jerusalem was as busy as a bee-hive. Everyone had something to do. The gardeners were taking care of the palm trees which surrounded the Temple. The wood-work with its beautiful carvings, was being polished and the vessels of gold and silver were made to shine as brightly as the sun.

As the men looked at the robes which were worn by the High Priest at the New Year's service, when thousands of Israel's most faithful would come to Jerusalem, they glanced at the breast-plate. The breast-plate contained twelve precious stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. They looked at it carefully and behold, one of its stones was missing.

Messengers were immediately sent to all the jewelers of Jerusalem. They described the missing stone and asked whether the jewelers had one just

like it. But, alas, they seemed to find no one who had just that kind of stone.

At last they came to a very small shop, which was owned by Nethina. As they entered, they found Damah, the son of Nethina, seated behind a low counter.

"Have you any precious stones?" asked one of the messengers.

"Yes, I have many kinds," replied Damah. "There are rubies, opals, turquoise, sapphires, emeralds and many others."

They described the missing jewel and Damah replied that he had the very one they wanted.

"We will give you 5,000 dinars for it," cried out the messengers.

"I shall fetch it for you," said Damah as he opened the door leading to a room in the rear of the shop.

In a few minutes, Damah returned empty-handed. The messengers stared at him in surprise.

"I am very sorry, I cannot give you the jewel now," Damah informed them.

"We will give you twice as much as we have offered, if you will only give it to us now," exclaimed one of the messengers who thought Damah was keeping the jewel because he wanted more money.

"I will not take it. All that I ask is that you return later in the afternoon," replied Damah.

The messengers saw it was useless to ask him again so they left. Two hours later they were again in Nethina's shop.

"I shall ask you to wait for just a moment," said Damah, as he left the messengers and once more went to the room in the rear.

As Damah stood in that room, he looked at the cedar chest, in which the precious jewels were kept. He watched to see if his father, who had been resting one foot on the chest while he was taking an afternoon nap, was awake. Just then his father stirred and awakened and Damah opened the chest.

As he removed the box of jewels and gave the messengers the very stone they needed, they said: "Here are 10,000 dinars for the stone."

"No," replied Damah, "I shall accept but 5,000 dinars, as we had first agreed. I could not give you the stone sooner, because I did not want to awaken my father."

"Will you not accept the larger price?" asked the messengers.

Again Damah refused: "I will not take more money just because I did my duty toward my father."

"What a devoted son!" said the messengers to one another as they went happily on their way to the temple, with the precious jewel.

THE KING AND THE JUDGE

In ancient Judea there ruled a king by the name of Alexander Jannai. He was descended from the noble house of the Maccabees, who had saved their people from the hands of the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes.

Alexander Jannai made his people sad, for he was not a true Maccabean. He became a wicked tyrant, just like Antiochus. Every one feared him, for he would execute anyone who dared to say anything he did not like.

There was one brave and fearless man in those days and his name was Simeon ben Shetach. Like the prophet Elijah, he had left his country for a time. He had said so many things that were displeasing to the king that his life was in danger.

After several years, King Alexander gave a banquet, at which the queen was also present. It was in honor of some princes who had come to Jerusalem to visit him. As the princes seated themselves at the tables, one of them arose and said: "We remember that when we visited your palace several years ago, there sat with us a very brilliant man, whose company we enjoyed and to whose words of

wisdom we eagerly listened. Why is he not with us today as at other times?"

For the first time the king felt ashamed of himself. He did not say a word, but instead called a messenger and told him to go to Simeon's friends and ask where this long absent sage could be found.

Fortunately, Simeon had been hiding in Jerusalem. When the messenger promised that the king would do him no harm, Simeon set out for the palace. As he reached the banquet room, the king greeted him and welcomed him. To Simeon's surprise, Alexander Jannai led him to a seat between the queen and himself.

As they sat next to one another, the king asked Simeon, "Why did you leave Jerusalem?" Simeon answered, "I knew that you were angry toward me and that my life was in danger."

Though the king afterward tried to flatter Simeon in many ways, Simeon remained honest and true to his own conscience. As a judge in the Sanhedrin, the court of Jerusalem, he was still the fearless man he had always been.

One day one of the servants of King Jannai killed a man. According to the Jewish law, the master was responsible for whatever his servants did, and so the king was asked by Simeon to come before the court. But Jannai refused to come and sent his servant to appear before them instead. Again the court reminded the king of the law and requested him to come to answer for the crime of his slave.

The king finally came and entered the court-room

in a very haughty manner. As he took his seat, Simeon called out to him: "O King, rise and show honor to the Law of God!" Jannai, in thundering tones, answered: "I refuse to do as you ask. I shall do whatever the other judges say."

To Simeon's surprise, the judges of the Sanhedrin, who were afraid of the king, did not dare say a word. Simeon could not bear to see the king act so unjustly, so he arose and cried out to the judges: "You are cowards. You are afraid to speak before the king. Some day you will have to explain this before God, who is the King of all kings. God wants us to fear no living man. We must speak the truth even against the king and tell him when he is wrong."

The king was so amazed at the truth of Simeon's words and at the thought that God was a greater king, whose law he, too, must obey, that he did not even dare to punish Simeon ben Shetach. No wonder that all people of Israel honored Simeon even more than their king.

A PRINCE WITH TWO CROWNS

In the land of ancient Babylon there lived a prince, and he was only a lad. His family owned a very precious crown, the very crown that had been worn by his famous ancestor, King David, and all the kings that had followed him. Strange to say, this young prince never dreamed of the day when his family, the royal house of David, might be restored to the throne; of the day when he would sit before his people, dressed in magnificent robes of purple, with a crown of gold and precious jewels on his head.

This prince, whose name was Hillel, had heard of another crown that he treasured more. Each day he planned how, at some time, he might get it for himself. He could never forget the wonderful stories that had been told about it by merchants who came with their camels from distant Palestine in the spring and the fall of each year. These merchants spoke of it while they sold their wares. As they sat at the wells near the gates of the city, watering their camels, they were wishing and hoping that the crown might be their own.

Late in the spring, after the merchants had left Babylon, Hillel decided to set out alone for Palestine

in search of the crown. He knew only this one thing, that the crown was kept somewhere in a little schoolhouse of Jerusalem and very carefully guarded.

It was a very hot day in summer when he finally reached this famous city. He was very much hurt when he noticed the boys of Jerusalem make fun of him, for they could easily tell he was a foreigner and a Babylonian, and they despised a Babylonian.

But Hillel was not so easily discouraged. He went about the city day after day, trying to learn something about the school with the famous crown. He soon found out that not every one was allowed to enter it, and that a certain amount of money had to be given each day to the doorkeeper before one was admitted.

Poor, hungry boy that Hillel was, he started going from one house to another, seeking for a position, for some work that would enable him to earn a little money, to buy food for himself and to pay the daily admission fee to the school. How happy he was when he got a job to chop wood. Winter was coming on and every one was putting in his supply of wood for the cold months ahead.

It was a proud and cheerful Hillel that walked to the school one day and paid his hard-earned money at the door. As he took his place in one of the seats, he looked all around him. His eyes searched every part of that large room where hundreds of old and young men were seated with him. He was searching and searching for that mysterious crown.

As he sat there silent, he suddenly noticed every

one rise as two very distinguished looking men entered and walked forward to the platform at the front of the room. He later learned that these two men were the famous teachers, Shemaiah and Abtalion.

Week after week he went to this school until one day in mid-winter, when the snow began to fall heavily upon the ground. His job of wood-chopping was gone, and his savings were very, very little. With a sad and heavy heart, he gave his last bit of money to the doorkeeper. The next day he had lost all hope of ever again entering the school.

As Hillel sat in his cold room, with his head buried in his hands, a thought suddenly occurred to him. He remembered that if he was to succeed in getting the crown, he must not miss a single word uttered by the famous teachers of the school. On that very day, he said to himself, they might say something that would reveal the whole secret of the crown he so earnestly wanted.

Without losing a moment, he rushed to the school building and noticed that on its roof there was a skylight, and that one of its panes of glass was broken. He ran to the rear of the building, climbed to the roof and placed his ear against the opening in the skylight. He could hear every word! He became so interested that he forgot his very uncomfortable and dangerous position.

That evening the teachers and the pupils had gone home, but when they entered that same room the next morning, they were surprised to find it darker

than usual. They called the doorkeeper, and as they looked up, they noticed something dark against the skylight.

The doorkeeper rushed to the roof and, sweeping away the snow from the skylight, found poor Hillel there, almost frozen to death. He carried him into the schoolhouse and all worked over him to bring warmth back into his stiff little body. He had become so interested in the lecture of the day before, that he had not noticed the snow falling heavily upon him.

When he had recovered sufficiently to tell his story, the teachers, Shemaiah and Abtalion, told him that he would be permitted to attend the school every day without paying any fee.

Several years later, Hillel returned to Babylon. The two teachers, Shemaiah and Abtalion, had died. The teachers, who took their place in that school, were not respected by the people, for they did not seem to have kept any of the knowledge that they had received from their famous teachers.

One day Hillel decided to go back to Jerusalem. He had come to love it so much that he could not stay away any longer. One can well imagine that the first place to which he went was the old schoolhouse. As he stood at its door, he heard the teachers and the people arguing and discussing a religious question. It was about a religious law of the Passover. No one seemed to be able to answer the question.

Suddenly some one discovered Hillel and cried out:

"Hillel, the Babylonian, is here. Perhaps he can tell us what the right law is." The teachers laughed at the thought that a Babylonian might know anything.

Hillel stepped forward and he answered their question clearly and satisfied all that his answer was just as the famous teachers, Shemaiah and Abtalion, had taught the people in their day. So they cried out: "Hillel shall be our teacher. He shall be the head of our school and of our Sanhedrin."

So the two teachers resigned, and the people called Hillel forward and said: "There are three crowns. One is the crown that is worn by a king; another is the crown that is worn by the high priest. Today we give you the greatest crown of them all, the Crown of the Torah, the Crown of Learning, because you excel us all in wisdom."

It was only then that Hillel understood that every day he spent at the school, listening carefully to his wise teachers, brought the crown he had been searching for, nearer and nearer to him. It was the Crown of Learning.

GENTLE HILLEL

Hillel, the Prince, with all his wisdom, was modest and gentle. Many wondered whether it was at all possible to make him angry, and they tried, in ever so many ways, to annoy him.

One day two men made a wager concerning Hillel. The one, who insisted he could make this great teacher show his anger, ran up to Hillel's home and cried out: "Where is Hillel?" The man acted very disrespectfully, for he did not speak of Hillel as "my master" or "rabbi."

Hillel came forth and quietly asked: "Who wishes to see me?"

"I have some questions to ask you," blurted the discourteous man. "Can you tell me why the Tadmorians have weak eyes?"

"The country in which the Tadmorians live," said Hillel, "is very sandy. The storms constantly blow the sand into their eyes and make them quite sore."

The questioner left. After a few moments, he again rushed into Hillel's home: "Where is Hillel?"

"Can I serve you again?" asked Hillel.

"Why do the Africans have broad feet?" demanded the man.

"That is because they live in a marshy country," responded Hillel.

Again and again, the questioner returned, and each time with a more annoying question.

"I have many more questions to ask, but I do not want to make you angry," he said.

"Please ask me anything you desire," declared Hillel, "and if I can, I shall answer your questions."

The man himself was getting very angry to think that anything he said failed to put Hillel in a bad humor. He would now make his last attempt and say something that would surely hurt him.

"I hope that Israel may not have many like you."

"Why do you wish that?" inquired the patient Hillel.

"Because I have lost my wager in not being able to make you angry," said the man, as he went on his way.

On another occasion, a Roman boy went to the school of Rabbi Shammai and knocked at the door.

"What do you want?" growled Shammai.

"Teach me your whole religion while I stand on one foot," shouted the boy.

Shammai thought the Roman youth was making fun of him, so he seized a rod and rushed to beat the boy. But the boy ran away.

The boy then went to Hillel's school and knocked at the door. Hillel himself came and opened it.

"Come in, my young man. Is there anything you desire?"

"Can you tell me your whole religion while I stand on one foot?" asked the boy.

"Surely," said Hillel. "Do not unto another, what you would dislike to have another do to you. That is our entire religion."

It is said that Emperor Alexander Severus of Rome, who lived many years after Hillel, had a statue of Abraham, the great Jewish patriarch in his room, and on the wall were written the very words that this modest teacher Hillel had said to the Roman boy while he stood on one foot.

JOHANAN BEN ZAKKAI AND HIS FAMOUS PUPIL

Playing on the flat roof of their little home in Jerusalem, was the little two-year old boy Johanan, with his mother sitting nearby. The sun's hot rays beat down upon them each day and Johanan's mother would always ask: "Is it hot? Is it too hot for you, my dear little boy?" His only answer was a smile.

But today his mother was surprised when she heard him cry out: "Mamma, hot!" They were the first words that he had spoken clearly.

It was right then that Johanan had his first lesson from his mother, for, as soon as a Jewish child spoke its first word, it was taught the well-known verse: "Shema Yisroel Adonoy Elohenu Adonoy Echod!" "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!" His first school was his home, and his father and mother were his first teachers. But two years later he went to a real school, where there were many boys, and each day his father would carry him in his arms to the classroom, and from the classroom back home again.

His classes were very interesting, for at the age of five, he studied the stories about Abraham, Joseph and Moses. When he became older he had, as his

teachers, some of the most famous rabbis in Jerusalem. The modest Rabbi Hillel was one of his teachers and Johanan soon became his favorite pupil. Hillel was so pleased with Johanan's earnest work, that he said Johanan would some day be one of the greatest teachers in Palestine.

How proud Johanan was, to know that his teacher Hillel expected him to be a great man! He knew how happy his father and mother would be if he became a famous teacher!

After many, many years, Johanan, or Johanan ben Zakkai, as he was called, became a teacher in the same school where he had once been a pupil. He was so honored and beloved by all that he was chosen as the head of the school, just as Hillel had said years ago.

Not far from Jerusalem there lived a little boy named Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. As he helped the men on his father's farm pick the olives and grapes, he was always thinking about Johanan's school at Jerusalem. How he would love to be a pupil in that school!

One day, Eliezer's father, Hyrcanus, called his family together and told them that they would have to leave their farm with him and go elsewhere to live. The servants got the cattle ready and put the household goods on the backs of the camels. Eliezer cried when his father announced this sad news, for the village to which they were going was still further from Jerusalem. He had always dreamed of the day when he would be allowed to take his

father's beautiful Arabian horse and ride to the city of Jerusalem to see the famous teacher and his school. And now his father was asking him to go far, far away.

Hyrcanus and his family were soon ready to go on their trip, but they went without Eliezer. Eliezer set out alone, on the road toward Jerusalem, without a single penny in his pocket. He spent the first two nights sleeping in the open fields, underneath the starry skies. On the third day he rose at sunrise and noticed that he was getting nearer and nearer to the Holy City. At last he saw the Temple on the hill, and his heart was in his mouth and he danced for joy. He walked faster and faster so that he might reach the city as quickly as possible. He was so weak and hungry that he could hardly stand, but he had made up his mind to see Johanan ben Zakkai and his school before he would do anything else.

O how joyful he was, as he walked through the streets of Jerusalem, asking everyone to point out the school building! There it was! It was the happiest moment in his life when he walked into the large classroom where Rabbi Johanan was seated in front of his pupils, giving them knowledge and instruction.

Eliezer quietly walked to a seat. For three hours he sat there without saying a single word. But Rabbi Johanan noticed the stranger and he said to Eliezer: "Peace be yours. Please tell us who you are and where you are from?" As Eliezer spoke,

Johanan noticed that he seemed very weak for his voice could hardly be heard.

On the following day, Eliezer secured a position and earned enough money to buy food. He continued to go to the school and soon won the love of all his classmates. Johanan ben Zakkai praised him very often for his wonderful answers to many questions.

In the meantime, three years had passed and Hyrcanus returned to his former home with his sons. He had heard that Eliezer was at Jerusalem, but he did not know what he was doing there. Hyrcanus had become very wealthy and his sons decided that Eliezer should receive nothing when their father died.

So one day, they went to their father and said: "Our father, we have always helped you. But Eliezer left you a few years ago and you have not seen him since. You are getting old and you will soon make your will, telling us how you want us to divide your money and your property."

Hyrcanus said: "My sons, I realize that I am getting old. God has blessed me and made me prosper. What is it that you wish me to do?"

The sons replied: "Do not allow Eliezer to receive any share of your property. Make him suffer for leaving you."

So Hyrcanus set out for Jerusalem, to get the advice of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai. He wanted Rabbi Johanan to arrange his will so that after his death, Eliezer would receive nothing.

He soon reached Jerusalem and, entering the school, Hyrcanus saw Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai and all his pupils, reading prayers, for its was the Sabbath Eve. Toward the end of the service, some one arose and gave a lecture. It was such a wonderful address that when the speaker had finished, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai went up to him, kissed him on the forehead and said, "O, happy should the people of Israel be, to have a learned man like you."

Hyrcanus looked and was amazed. He could hardly believe his eyes. He looked again and behold, the speaker had been his own son, Eliezer! He cried out: "Is it, indeed, my son?"

He had not expected to find his son in this house of learning. He was so happy to see Eliezer in this wonderful school and to know that he had been studying all those years, that he changed his mind.

Hyrcanus went to the front of the classroom, stood next to Rabbi Johanan and said to all who were there: "I came here to arrange my will so that my son Eliezer should receive nothing. But now that I see he has devoted himself to the noblest life that a Jew can live, a life of study, I have decided to give him double the share that I shall give to each one of my other sons." He then walked over to Eliezer, put his arms about him and kissed him. After a few moments, Eliezer replied: "My dear father, I want no portion of your wealth. Let my brothers have it all. I have all the riches in the world. For God and the Torah, knowledge and truth, are my portion."

Johanan then left his seat and came toward them and put his hand on Eliezer's shoulders, patting him and praising him for his good work during the three years he had spent at the school. How happy Hyrcanus was when he heard the famous Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai call his son Eliezer, his best pupil. They then walked out of the school and went slowly toward Rabbi Johanan's home.

A SCHOOL THAT SAVED A NATION

The Roman army was battering down the walls of Jerusalem. The Jewish defenders of the Holy City were face to face with death and despair. Their number grew less and less as one day followed another. Even the women and children, who were not too weak from hunger, helped the brave little army that was fighting against great odds.

Some men insisted on making peace with the Romans by surrendering. "Why should we wait until every one of our wives and children die in this wretched war?" they asked.

The Zealots would not listen to their appeal. The Zealots had sworn hatred against the Romans and were determined to die rather than surrender. It was they who had started the revolution against Rome, whose kings had been persecuting and destroying their country. They had lived in caves and in the rocky hillsides, in their battles against the Roman soldiers. Their fearlessness gave courage to every Jew in Palestine.

During the siege of Jerusalem, the Zealots made a rule that no one was allowed to go out of the city. Some men had wanted to open the gates and surrender, but the Zealots took them and threw them over

the walls, to be killed by the Romans. They could never forget that Josephus, their greatest general, had proven a traitor and had given himself up to the Romans. Any one who seemed afraid to fight the Romans, was a coward in their eyes.

One of the members of the party of peace was Johanan ben Zakkai, the great teacher. "Why should we destroy the city and our Holy Temple?" he asked the Zealots. But they paid no heed to him.

It is said that there were some Roman spies in the city who soon told the Roman generals that Johanan ben Zakkai was a friend of Rome. Such messages from the city were sent on pieces of paper which were shot on arrows into the Roman camp.

Johanan ben Zakkai was certain that Jerusalem would soon fall, and with it, the Temple. He wondered where the Jews, their leaders and their teachers, would meet together after it was gone. He soon thought of a plan.

"Ben Batiach, will you help me?" asked Johanan.

"How can I be of any help to you?" inquired Ben Batiach, who, strange to say, was one of the leaders of the Zealots.

"I must get out of this city," replied Johanan. "How can I escape the guards at the gate?"

Since Jerusalem was a sacred city, no people were buried within its walls. So Johanan ben Zakkai made up his mind that he would have himself placed in a coffin and carried out of the city as a corpse.

Ben Batiach helped him, and Johanan's two pupils, Eleazer and Joshua, carried the casket.

As they reached the gate, the guards stopped them.

"Who are you carrying?" they cried out.

"The body of our sainted master, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai," said the pupils.

"We shall make certain," declared the guards, as they lifted their swords, to thrust them through the top of the casket.

"Stop!" cried one of the pupils. "Will you be guilty of mutilating and cutting up the lifeless body of Israel's great teacher?"

The guards drew back their swords and allowed the pupils to pass through the gate. The men did not stop until they reached the camp of the Roman soldiers.

"May we speak with your great leader, Titus?" they requested.

"What is your mission?" the Roman guards asked.

"Our master, Johanan ben Zakkai, desires the privilege of an audience with him," answered the pupils, as Johanan stepped out of the casket on the ground.

As Johanan came before Titus, the Roman general greeted him as a friend.

"What favors can I grant you?" offered Titus.

"I have but one request," replied Johanan. "I should be very grateful if you will let me establish a school in the little city of Jabneh."

Titus could see no harm in such a simple request, and so he readily granted it.

Johanan started his school at once. Pupils gradually came there and received knowledge and instruction from this great rabbi. In the meantime, Titus and his army pressed forward against Jerusalem, and on the Ninth Day of the Hebrew month, Ab, the city and its defenders fell into the hands of the Romans. The walls of the city were razed to the ground, and the beautiful Temple was no more. Titus carried away all the precious things within the Temple, including the large seven-branched candlestick, the ark and the sacred scrolls. He also took several hundred Jewish captives with him, who marched in chains through the triumphal arch at Rome, in the great procession celebrating the victory of Titus.

When Johanan heard that Jerusalem had fallen, he did not mourn. He called together all the great men from every part of Palestine and asked them to meet in the school house of Jabneh. These teachers and leaders kept the Jewish people together, now that they no longer had a king and had lost their freedom to the Romans. They showed their people how they could still carry on their religion, even if the Temple and Jerusalem were gone. They trained new leaders and sent them to all places where Jews had gone, and so kept them united.

The little school house of Johanan ben Zakkai had preserved the Jewish people.

RACHEL AND AKIBA, THE SHEPHERD

In the city of Jerusalem there lived a rich man who had a very large flock of sheep. Every morning his shepherd, Akiba, could be seen leading the flock through the gates of Jerusalem, out into the green pastures that surrounded the city's high walls. This shepherd could not read or write. No one talked with him and no one gave him even a pleasant word, for he seemed to be only an ignorant shepherd.

There was one girl who treated him very kindly. She had watched him as he sat in the fields day after day, with the sheep grazing around him. She had never heard him speak an unkind word. He was honest. He was faithful and tender, even to the sheep under his care.

Akiba loved her, but he did not dare to ask her to become his wife, for she was Rachel, the daughter of his rich master. But Rachel loved Akiba and one day she agreed to marry him on the condition that Akiba would study and become a learned man.

When Rachel's father heard that she had married his poor and ignorant shepherd, he became very angry and drove her out of his home. He would let them both starve.

Though Akiba and Rachel were happy they had

many sad days. Often there was not a bit of food in their house. Akiba would look at his wife, Rachel, and think of the beautiful garments she might have worn had she not married him. Once he cried out: "Some day I shall buy you a garment with the picture of Jerusalem, the holy city, embroidered on it in gold!"

Day after day passed and then Rachel reminded Akiba of his promise to enter some school in Palestine. Akiba was very worried. He thought he could never learn anything, because for so many years everyone had made him feel he was ignorant.

After a few years he went to the Beth Ha-sefer, the house of study, and his little son was with him. The teacher gave him a little scroll, on which were written the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. He held the scroll at one end and his little boy held it at the other, as they sat there, studying their lessons together.

He left one school for another until he came to the best one in Palestine, where he spent several years.

After he had been away for twelve years, he returned to his home and, as he stood in the doorway, he overheard his wife say to a neighbor: "I am not angry because he has been away from me all these years. I wish he would remain at his studies for twelve more years." Akiba did not say a word. He turned around and left the home he was so eager to enter and was soon on his way back to his wonderful school.

The years passed quickly and Akiba again set out for his home. With him were hundreds of pupils who had come to love him and would not think of parting from him. As he entered the city, where his wife still lived, the people gazed and gazed at this man, who had hundreds of boys following him. Some one soon discovered that this man was Akiba, and the news spread throughout the whole town. Everyone came out to the market place to meet him.

As the crowds stood around him, a woman made her way through them, rushed forward to the man that everyone was honoring, fell at his feet and kissed them. When the pupils of Akiba saw this woman with torn and ragged clothes, they started to push her aside. But Akiba stooped down to pick her up, and, holding her in his arms, cried out: "Touch her not! This is my dearly beloved wife. All the learning that I have, I owe to her. For all the teaching you receive from me you must be thankful to her. Her sacrifice and her suffering all these years made it possible for me to study."

When Rachel's father heard that this man, learned in the Torah of Israel, was his own son-in-law, Akiba, he forgave him and kissed him.

What a happy family they were as they walked away from the market place—Akiba, Rachel and her father! Akiba received half of the wealth of his father-in-law and the first thing he did with his money was to buy Rachel the garment that he had promised, with the picture of Jerusalem embroidered on it in gold.

WHEN GIANTS ROAMED PALESTINE

The Hero Bar Cochba

On the beautiful hills of Palestine, where David had once tended his flock of sheep, there roamed a terrible monster. It seemed that this ancient country of the Jew could never have peace. One giant after another walked through it, tearing down the trees, burning the houses and killing the poor mothers and their little children. The first giant was Sennacherib of Assyria; then came Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon; and then still another giant, Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria.

The last giants were the most cruel of all. They were many and they were known as the Caesars of Rome. They stayed in Palestine for years and years, much longer than any of the giants that had come before them.

How the people did fear them! The Jews would hide for months at a time in the caves of the mountains. If a man dared to do anything that these giants did not like, he would be nailed to a cross and left there to die.

These giants would steal anything that was precious. They would rob the poor people. They even

burned the beautiful and holy Temple at Jerusalem, and carried away all of its golden ornaments, including the larger seven-branched candlestick, the magnificent ark and the vessels of gold. They would take men, women and children and sell them into other countries as slaves. They would not allow the people to come together in their synagogues, to pray or to study. These giants used to pray to stone gods and idols of their own, to the god of thunder, to the god of war, to the god of the Sea and many others; and they wanted the Jews to do the same.

During these unhappy times, there arose a giant among the Jews. He had first been known as Simeon Bar Cosiba, but Rabbi Akiba changed his name to Simeon Bar Cochba, "Cochba" meaning "a star." Rabbi Akiba told all the people that Simeon Bar Cochba was the star that was to bring light and hope to all Israel; he was the mighty man who would end all their suffering.

Thousands upon thousands of men came running to Bar Cochba. Hundreds and hundreds left their hiding places in the caves to join his army. They were ready to make Palestine free!

We are told that Bar Cochba would not accept every man as a soldier. In order to find out whether they had courage and were prepared to suffer pain, he commanded them to cut off one of their fingers. The Sages, the wise men of Israel, told Bar Cochba that he was doing his people a great wrong in demanding such a cruel test of bravery.

Bar Cochba asked the Sages: "How then can I

tell whether my soldiers are brave men?" So they said to him: "Let no man be considered one of your soldiers unless he can pull up by the roots one of the big cedar trees in the forests of Lebanon, while riding on horse-back at full speed."

The fearless Bar Cochba soon led his armies through Palestine. One fortress after another fell into his hands and, in a few months, fifty of the strongest cities had been captured by his men. They had driven out the armies of the Roman giants. But the greatest victory of all was the victory that gave them back their holy city, Jerusalem.

How happy the people were when they all went on foot or rode on horses to Jerusalem, to see Bar Cochba crowned as king! Not only the Jews, but also the people from nearby countries, hailed this brave man as their deliverer from the Caesars. New silver coins were made. The old money had the figure of a Roman giant on one side, and the sad picture of a Jew standing by a palm tree, with his hands tied behind his back, with a weeping Jewess on the other side of the tree.

How different was the money made by the king, Bar Cochba! On the front of the coin was the word "Simeon," the king's first name; a star and a picture of the entrance to the beautiful Temple, which the Caesars had destroyed. On the back of the coin were the words: "Jerusalem is delivered," and pictures of the Ethrog and the Lulab, the fragrant citron fruit and the palm of Palestine.

THE OLD MAN OF BETHAR

After Bar Cochba had ruled for two years, the Roman giants decided to call the strongest man they had, to help them crush Bar Cochba and the land of the Jews, the land of Judea. Bar Cochba fought against these new armies as fearlessly as ever. It is said that when the machines of the Roman giants would throw big rocks over the walls of his fort, Bar Cochba would catch them on his knees and throw them back against the Roman armies, with a terrific force.

The Romans soon became too powerful for Bar Cochba. One fortress after another fell, until the mighty one of Bethar alone was left. Here Bar Cochba shut himself up with his strongest army. This fort was hidden among the mountains and it could be reached only through a secret tunnel and hidden passage.

In the fortified city of Bethar there lived a very old man, Eleazar, who had lived during the time when the first Roman giants came and burned the holy Temple at Jerusalem. He wept when he remembered the suffering of the Jews in those earlier days, and every day he fasted and prayed to God that the fortress of Bethar might not fall into the

hands of the Romans. When the soldiers of Bar Cochba looked at this old man, who was so weak and yet fasted, they became braver and braver.

But there was one traitor in the army of Bar Cochba, and he was a Samaritan. One day this Samaritan went through the secret tunnel and then ran over the mountains to the Roman army. He promised to show the Roman giants how they could capture Bethar, through the secret entrance. When he was asked how it could be done, the Samaritan answered: "As long as the old man, Eleazar, sits in ashes, fasting and praying, you cannot capture the city."

The Samaritan returned to Bethar through the hidden passage, and he kept thinking and thinking how he could get Eleazar to stop praying and fasting. Then he went to Eleazar, who sat praying. He leaned over and whispered into Eleazar's ear, as though he were saying something very secret.

Some of Bar Cochba's men were standing nearby when this happened and they immediately ran to Bar Cochba and cried out: "There is a secret plot between Eleazar and the Samaritan. We saw them as they whispered to each other. They are planning to betray us to the Romans."

Bar Cochba ordered his guards to bring the Samaritan to him at once. "What did you whisper to Eleazar?" he asked. The sly Samaritan replied: "Woe unto me if I tell and woe unto me if I do not tell! If I say a word, the Roman giants will kill me, and if I remain silent, you will kill me. I think I

shall remain silent and refuse to reveal my secret."

Bar Cochba stamped furiously: "Call Eleazar at once!" "What did this Samaritan say to you?" thundered Bar Cochba.

Eleazar, who had been so intent on praying that he did not know the Samaritan had tried to whisper into his ear, answered: "I know nothing about it."

This reply made Bar Cochba angrier still, and, rising from his seat, he smote Eleazar a powerful blow. Poor Eleazar, who was weak from his fasting, fell to the ground and died in an instant.

When the brave soldiers of Bar Cochba saw Eleazar fall to the ground, their courage and bravery were gone. After Bar Cochba had overcome his anger and thought of what he had done, he, too, lost his courage. This old man, sitting in the fort, praying and fasting, had given them more strength than thousands of soldiers could possibly give. The Romans, who soon heard of Eleazar's death, rushed against the fortress of Bethar and killed all of its brave defenders. Among those who fell, was the bravest of them all, their leader, Bar Cochba.

STORIES TOLD BY THE RABBIS

1. The Fox and the Fishes

When the Roman giants tormented the Jews and told them they would be killed if they dared keep their religion, some rabbis advised their people to stop observing Jewish customs and laws. Rabbi Akiba was one who refused to bow to the Romans. He had made up his mind to be true to his faith, no matter what happened.

When Pappus once asked Akiba: "Are you not afraid to disobey the command of the Romans?" Akiba answered by telling the following story:

"A fox was walking along the banks of a river. As he looked into the water, he saw hundreds of little fishes there, all excited. 'Why are you afraid?' he asked them. The fish replied: 'We are afraid of the fisherman's nets.' The fox then advised them: 'Come out on dry land and I shall hide you in the rocks.' Thereupon the fish answered: 'You are considered to be the most cunning among all animals. But you seem to be the most stupid. If we are in danger in the water, the only place where we can keep alive, how much more dangerous will it be for us on the dry land?' "

"If my life is in danger while I am a true Jew,"

exclaimed Rabbi Akiba, "I shall not be able to save myself by being false to my religion. The Jew cannot live without his religion." Rabbi Akiba was taken prisoner shortly afterwards and placed in a dungeon. There he met Pappus, who had hoped to save himself from danger by not remaining true to his religion and by obeying the Romans.

2. The Fox and the Grapes

When Rabbi Meir spoke, every one listened. They knew that he never failed to tell a story. It is said that he told three hundred different stories about the fox. Among his favorite ones, was the following:

The fox met a bear who was very hungry. "Come," said the fox, "and I will show you where you can find plenty to eat." So the fox led the bear into a home where the people were just getting ready to eat their Sabbath dinner. When they saw the bear, they rushed for some large sticks and gave him a terrible beating before he could escape.

The bear ran growling to the fox. "Why did you deceive me?" demanded the bear. "They were not angry at you," replied the fox. "They beat you because of your father who had once lived with them and always ate the best, leaving the poorest things for them."

"If you are still hungry," continued the fox, "I will take you to another place." So the fox lead the bear to a well. There were two buckets. The fox

entered one and went to the very bottom of the well, and the second bucket rose to the top. "Why did you descend into the well?" called the bear, as he peered down. "There are delicious meat and cheese here," answered the fox. As the bear looked again, he saw in the water the reflection of the bright moon. It looked like a big round piece of cheese. "Get into the other bucket and come down," cried the fox. The bear did just what he had been told—the bear went down and the fox went up. As the fox jumped out of the bucket, he looked down at the bear and laughed.

SCHOOL DAYS IN BABYLON

In Babylon there once lived a very wise teacher who was called Abba Areka, "Abba, the tall one." People, however, preferred to call him by the name of Rab. Every little boy knew him. No teacher was more kindhearted to little children than Rab. When he noticed that some schools had little boys who were hardly four years old and who had to study just as hard as the boys who were much older, he made a rule that a child must be six years old before it could be admitted to a school.

Strange to say, Rab felt that boys after this age should be made to study very hard, for he told his teachers to follow this rule: "After six years of age, stuff your pupil like an ox."

How those ancient teacher used to punish the boys who did not know their lessons! How happy the girls must have felt to think that they were not compelled to attend school! The teachers would use a cane or a lash with sharp points to beat the boys who did poor work. Rab thought he was a friend of the children when he commanded the teachers to use only a cat-o'-nine-tails, with straps made of leather. He would never permit a teacher in school

to dismiss a pupil who was not bright—the pupil must be allowed to remain in the classroom and listen to the brighter pupils recite.

One day, a Persian came to Rab and asked him to teach him how to read the Hebrew Bible. Rab began with him as he did with his youngest pupils. He took the Persian to a Hebrew chart and, pointing to the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, said: "This is 'Aleph.'" The Persian asked: "How do you know that letter is 'Aleph?' It may not be."

Rab paid no attention to his question. "This is 'Beth,'" continued Rab. "How do you know it is 'Beth?' You may be wrong," interrupted the Persian.

The second question made Rab very impatient. "Get out of my school," shouted Rab to the Persian.

There was another rabbi in the same city and his name was Samuel. He was dearly beloved by the Persians, for he could always be seen with their wisest men, and with the Persian men who studied the heavens and the stars. Samuel would also visit their schools. The Persian who had been driven away by Rab decided to go to Samuel. "Will you please teach me how to read the Hebrew Bible?" he asked.

Samuel began: "This is the letter 'Aleph.'" "How do you know it is?" asked the Persian. "This is the letter 'Beth,'" continued Samuel. "How am I to know that what you are saying is true?" called out the Persian.

Samuel said nothing. He walked closer to the

Persian, seized his ear and gave it a very sharp pull. "O, my ear, my ear!" cried out the Persian. "How do you know it is your ear?" asked Samuel.

"Why, everyone knows that it is an ear!" the Persian replied. "So do we all know that the first letter of our alphabet is 'Aleph,' and that the second letter is 'Beth,' " said Samuel.

Samuel then continued to teach him until the Persian knew all about the Bible and the religion of the Jew. The Persian came to love the Jewish religion so dearly that he asked Samuel to accept him as a Jew.

When the people heard this story, they said: "It is better to be patient like Samuel than to be impatient like Rab."

HUNA, THE GENEROUS FARMER

There was one country in which many Jewish farmers could still be found after the Romans had driven them from their land, and that country was Babylon. One of the most famous of these Babylonian farmers was Huna. Huna was a very, very poor man. Though he worked all day in the fields, he always found time to read and to study.

One day, as he went to the school near his farm, his teacher looked at him and said: "Huna, where is your belt?" He was wearing a piece of rope about his waist. Huna replied: "My dear teacher, I did not have enough money to buy wine for the Sabbath Kiddush, so I sold my belt."

He had very little money, but his wisdom was far more precious than all the wealth in the world. It was not long before every one in Babylon heard of this very wise farmer.

In those days, whenever people had a quarrel or a dispute, they would go to their rabbi who acted just as a judge does in our own courts.

Huna became a rabbi, but he still continued to be a farmer. He did not like to spend his whole life reading and studying. Whenever a man would ask him to act as judge on some matter, Huna would

say: "I will act as judge on one condition. You must give me a man who will do my farm work while I decide your case. I cannot afford to neglect my farm."

Some people thought it was a pity for a man so wise as Huna to work. One day a very rich man met this farmer-rabbi as he was leaving his fields, carrying his farm tools on his shoulder. This rich man said to Huna: "I do not want people to see you carrying tools like a workingman as you walk through the town. Please let me carry them for you." Huna refused him and said: "You never do this sort of work. You think it is unbecoming for a man who has wealth or an education to do farm work. I shall, therefore, not let you carry these tools now."

After many, many years, he became a very rich farmer. Every Friday some poor farmers would come to the town in which Huna lived, in order to sell their vegetables. They were very eager to sell all they had, at least two hours before it became dark, so that they might return to their homes before the Sabbath eve.

One Friday, as Rabbi Huna walked through the market-place, he noticed that some of the farmers, who had been there a week ago, were missing. On the following Friday he went through the market-place again, and he was surprised to find that fewer farmers than ever before had come to sell their vegetables.

So one day he called all the farmers who had been

remaining away and said: "You will starve your families if you do not bring your vegetables to the city to sell."

One of the farmers said: "Rabbi, some Fridays we sell all our vegetables; and on other Fridays the people buy so little that we have to throw away a great part and so lose much money."

Rabbi Huna finally succeeded in getting them to change their mind. On the next Friday, Rabbi Huna sent his servant to the market-place just a few minutes before the farmers usually left, and he said to him: "I want you to buy everything that the farmers have not sold."

Every week, at the very same hour, Rabbi Huna's servant could be seen on his way to the market-place, to buy anything that might be left. The farmers did not know why Huna bought so much every week. They came every Friday—not a one remained away, and each Friday they returned home happy. Huna the Rabbi, who had once been a poor farmer, knew how hard they worked. No wonder that he was so eager to help these poor farmers.

IN A CASTLE OF ARABIA

On the tower of the castle stood the guard, looking far out into the desert. He soon saw a cloud of dust. It seemed to be coming nearer and nearer. Now he could see very clearly. It was a man riding toward the castle, riding as furiously and as rapidly as he could.

The guard sounded the alarm. A hundred men jumped on their horses, each with a long spear in his hand and a sword at his side.

The man on horseback was now riding up the steep hill, on the road leading to the castle gate. They watched him and then they listened. They heard the familiar shout of their tribe. They quickly opened the gates of the castle and let him in.

"Abu ibn Hassim is dead!" cried the rider, as he jumped off his horse. "As I was returning homeward, I saw a struggle between two horsemen. I raced toward them and soon I saw an enemy Arab driving away at breakneck speed. At the feet of his horse lay Abu ibn Hassim. He had just breathed his last, murdered by his enemy."

Everyone remained silent, but the eyes of these Arabian tribesmen were turned toward their power-

ful leader, Samuel ben Adijah, a Jew, whom they had chosen as their chief.

Samuel ben Adijah bowed his head to the ground and said: "My fathers, who came from Palestine, were men of peace. I, too, have tried to teach the men of Arabia our Bible and to have them believe with us that all men are God's children and that all people must obey the command, 'Thou shalt not kill.'"

"Shall we allow our enemies to kill us whenever they choose? How can we be men of peace?" asked one of the powerful men of Samuel's tribe.

"No, we must protect ourselves. We must also try to win their love so that we might teach them Israel's religion of love and brotherhood. It hurts my soul to see how the men of Arabia kill their fellow-Arabs who belong to a different tribe. Why should they be treacherous toward one another?"

For many, many days after this had happened, Samuel sat thinking and thinking how he might get the Arabs to listen to him and to his teaching against war. Then Samuel suddenly remembered that in a few days the Arabian month of Rahab would begin. During this month, all Arabian tribes would declare peace. Every one was safe from attack, so that the Arabs from everywhere might go to the sacred Arabian city, Mecca. This city was considered sacred because of a big black stone and the three hundred gods in the mosque of Mecca, and also because of a sacred well. The people would walk around the mosque and kiss the black stone

which they believed was a god. They would also bow down before the gods of their tribes.

But this was not why Samuel ben Adijah went to Mecca. For several days there were contests in poetry, for the Arabs could compose poems as beautiful as the hundreds of stories that they have given us in such books as "Arabian Nights." The sheiks or chiefs of the tribes would act as judges, together with one who was known as the "king of the poets," and would award prizes. The prize poems would then be sung throughout all Arabia.

While Samuel was in Mecca, he, too, would recite some of his best poems, for he was a poet and not only a warrior. He would sing poems about peace, about the one God who was the Father of all men, and about life in the desert. The Arabs became very fond of Samuel and almost every tribe wanted to be friendly with him and swore peace with him and his tribe.

The Arabs loved Samuel for another reason. They found him to be a man or honor, a man faithful and true. Throughout his life and long, long afterward, the Arabs had a saying that they used very often: "As faithful as Samuel." How faithful Samuel was, the following story will tell.

There was an Arab chief, Hegar, who ruled over many tribes. One day a messenger brought him word that a few men in one of the tribes were starting a rebellion against his rule, to get all people to say they did not want Hegar as leader. Hegar took several hundred horsemen with him, rushed to at-

tack the rebels and defeated them, taking many of them prisoners.

Among these prisoners were two men, one of whom was a poet, and the other a wizard. The poet bowed down before Hegar and recited many poems, in which he begged Hegar to spare his life and the lives of his fellow-prisoners. Hegar, who was very tender-hearted and merciful, granted his request and set all prisoners free.

After they had left the tents of Hegar, the wizard persuaded the poet to kill Hegar. So, at midnight, when Hegar's guards were asleep, the poet and the wizard crawled to his tent and murdered him.

In the morning, a horseman rode quickly to Amru, the son of Hegar, and said: "Your father has been found dead. The sword in his tent looks like the one worn by the wizard."

Amru cried out, in a voice that could be heard throughout the camp: "I will not rest until I take vengeance on these deceitful men and their whole tribe." His horsemen did not wait a minute. In an instant they were racing wildly with Amru, and, when they reached the deceitful tribe, they took many prisoners and killed the wizard and the poet.

There was one powerful Arabian sheik who hated Hegar. When he heard of what Hegar's son had done, he determined to destroy him. But Amru fled and went from one tribe to another to seek protection. Every one refused to hide him, for they would not dare fight the sheik who was pursuing Amru.

Finally, one of his friends told him to go to the

castle of Samuel ben Adijah. Amru took with him one of the poets of his tribe. As they reached the castle, the poet stood before the gates and recited a very wonderful poem, begging Samuel to have pity upon Amru and his few followers, and to shelter them in his castle. Samuel was very sorry for him, so he ordered his men to open the gates and let Amru enter.

After Amru had been in the castle for many weeks, he decided to go on a journey to see a distant king, to seek his help against the enemy tribes. He left his beautiful little daughter and all his weapons, treasures and uniforms with Samuel, asking him never to give them to anyone, and to keep them until he returned.

Poor Amru died on the way as he was returning home, but Samuel did not know. No sooner had Amru left Samuel than hundreds of Arabs came and asked that Samuel give them Amru's child and also his weapons and treasures. Samuel refused: "I will not do this treacherous thing. I will not break the promise I had made to the man who has put his faith in me. I will give them only to him, to whom the child and the treasures belong."

One day Samuel's little son had wandered a little distance from the castle and was seized by one of these cruel tribesmen. They came to the castle and cried out: "Samuel, we have your child. If you refuse to surrender everything that Amru has left with you, we will kill your son before your very eyes."

Samuel's face turned deathly pale. But, immediately, he rose to his full height and cried out: "I refuse to surrender them. Remember, if you kill my child, that he has many brothers who will take vengeance for the innocent blood you shed." The cruel Arab did not listen. As Samuel looked on, he killed the pretty little child before its father's very eyes. The treacherous Arabs then rushed against Samuel's castle. They were still determined to get everything that Amru had left for safe-keeping, but the castle was too strong. A few days later, Samuel heard of the death of Amru, so he called the relatives of this unfortunate leader and gave them the daughter and all the treasures that Amru had brought to the castle. All the Arabs who heard what Samuel had done, praised him and said: "There is no one as faithful as Samuel."

THE PRINCE OF CORDOVA

The Learned Chasdai

It was in the city of Cordova, in the land of Spain, that there arose a very prominent Jew, Chasdai ibn Shaprut. Chasdai was a man of great learning. He knew not only Hebrew, but also Arabic and Latin. His knowledge won for him the respect of the Caliph of Cordova, who made him one of his ministers and advisers. He became a prince, who served the caliph as loyally and as faithfully as he could.

Though Chasdai was very busy as minister of the caliph, he was always thinking of his fellow-Jews throughout the world. When ambassadors from the countries of Europe and Asia would come to the caliph's court, he would ask them about the Jews in their lands. When he heard that the Jews in Babylon had allowed their schools to become neglected, he sent a message to the Jews in that land and asked them to sell their valuable Talmuds to him, for the Hebrew college at Cordova. He also asked their most learned men to come to this college to teach. Spain was now becoming the home of the leading Jewish teachers of the world, just as Palestine and Babylon had once been.

One day Chasdai received some very surprising news. He heard that there was a Jewish kingdom in Asia. He knew that there had once been Jewish kings in Palestine and that armies had destroyed their land. To hear that there still was a Jewish king somewhere, was such joyful and such unexpected news, that he imagined he was only dreaming.

When the messengers from Asiatic kings came to Cordova, he asked them to tell him if the story of the Jewish kingdom was true and to find out where it was. As he was eager for some news about this kingdom, he decided to write a letter to the ruler, King Joseph.

It happened that the caliph was sending some messengers eastward, to Constantinople, and so Chasdai decided to send one of his own messengers, Isaac ben Nathan, with them. He gave him a letter to the emperor at Constantinople, asking him to help Isaac ben Nathan on his way to find the Jewish kingdom.

Chasdai was very sad when the messenger returned a few weeks later, with a letter from the emperor stating that the Black Sea must be crossed to reach the kingdom and that the waters were too stormy and dangerous.

Finally, he met two Jews who had come to the court and he told them of his difficulty. They promised to give his letter to some Jewish merchants of Hungary who made frequent trips into the land of Russia, which was right next to this Jewish kingdom.

In this letter, Chasdai told of the sufferings of the Jew in many lands, and how happy they were in Cordova, and how honors had come to him and other Jews. Though they were happy in this one land, he felt that nearly all of them would much rather go to a kingdom of their own, where a Jewish king ruled. He wanted King Joseph to tell him more about his kingdom, of which he had heard, for he could hardly believe that the news was true. He also asked if King Joseph was descended from one of the tribes of Israel, and if he knew when the Messiah would come to gather all Jews into their own land, and many other questions.

His letter closed with these wonderful words: "If I thought that this story of a Jewish kingdom were true, I would give up my position of honor and leave my friends. I would walk over hills and mountains, and cross dangerous seas, until I reached the country where his majesty rules, to see his greatness and the peaceful home of Israel's remnant. And when I should see it, my lips would overflow with songs of praise for Him who has not forgotten His people, Israel."

King Joseph was happy to receive this letter and answered all the questions. He told Chasdai that his people were known as the Chazars, that they were not descended from the Jewish people but had accepted the Jewish religion and observed it with all their heart and soul. King Joseph hoped that Chasdai might come to his kingdom and help him rule wisely over his people.

When Chasdai read the king's reply, he was very disappointed. Had the Chazars been of the tribes of Israel, he would have forsaken everything at Cordova to join them and so build a kingdom of the Jews for the Jews. Only a year before Chasdai died, the kingdom of the Chazars was destroyed by the Russian armies and nothing more has been heard of it. To his very last day, Chasdai worked with all his power to help the Jews in Cordova and the Jews everywhere.

THE RABBI WHO SOWED SEEDS OF HAPPINESS

As Rabbi Gershom ben Judah was walking along the road, leading to one of the cities of Germany, he met a fellow-Jew.

"Where are you going, my dear friend?" asked the rabbi.

"I am on my way to Venice," the stranger replied.

"Do you intend to remain there?" again inquired Rabbi Gershom.

"No, my dear sir," exclaimed the man. "I shall stay there but a few days. From Venice, I shall sail for Asia, and then go to the city of Sura in Babylonia. I am going on a mission for the Jews of my city, to ask the rabbis of Babylonia many questions about our religion."

Rabbi Gershom sat down by the roadside and thought: "What a long journey our Jews must make to gain knowledge about our faith!"

He declared to himself that he would some day write a book, explaining the religious laws and customs of Judaism. In this book, the people would find all their questions answered and they would no longer have to send a messenger from Germany

to distant Babylonia, to receive enlightenment. Before many years had passed, this book was written and men called Rabbi Gershom "the light of those in exile."

It seemed that Rabbi Gershom was always bent on making people happy. He often heard people complain that messengers, carrying important letters from country to country, would open them and read them. These messengers would then tell other people what was in the letters. No message could be kept secret and private.

Everybody rejoiced when they heard a letter from Rabbi Gershom read in the synagogue one Sabbath morning, declaring that it would hereafter be considered a great crime for a messenger to open a private letter and read it. All messengers honored Rabbi Gershom and obeyed, and men were no longer afraid to send important messages.

As he lived among his people for many years, he saw that the women needed his protection. The following story tells how he made every Jewish wife and mother happy.

In the city in which the rabbi lived, there also lived a great king. Gershom ben Judah was not only a rabbi. He was also a goldsmith, and knew how to make very artistic articles out of gold. The king and his princes loved to have Gershom ben Judah make gold rings and chains and other precious things for them, for he did such wonderful work.

There was one prince, however, who was very envious of Gershom. He was determined to harm

the rabbi in some way, for he disliked to see any one so popular with the king.

One day the king decided to have a new throne made.

"I desire a throne that shall be like King Solomon's," said the king.

"Your Majesty, it may be that Gershom ben Judah can make it for you," suggested the treacherous prince.

The king sent for Gershom.

"Can you make a throne such as I have described?" asked the king, after he had finished speaking to the goldsmith.

"I can, your Majesty," answered Gershom, "but I shall need much gold and silver for it."

"I shall tell my royal treasurer that he is to give you all the gold and silver and precious stones you require," declared the king.

"O king," continued Rabbi Gershom, "I have many workmen, from whom it will be impossible to conceal so much gold and precious gems. A few may be dishonest and keep some of it for themselves."

"Do not trouble yourself about that," assured the king. "I know you will be as careful as one can be with so much precious metal. All that I desire is that the throne shall be as wonderful and as beautiful as Solomon's."

When Rabbi Gershom finished the throne, it was so heavily laden and ornamented with gold and silver and jewels, that there were no scales in the

entire land of Germany strong enough to weigh it. On the day that it was taken to the king's palace, there was a big procession. Thirty horses, in harness covered with silver, were drawing a long wagon on which the throne had been placed. A hundred knights in their brightest armor, rode on their horses on each side of the wagon. There was great rejoicing when the people beheld this new throne of their king.

After this wonderful procession had ended, the king saw Rabbi Gershom in the palace.

"You could tell how magnificent your work must be by the shouts of wonder from the men and women on the streets of my capital," said the king. "Now tell me how much I shall give you for your work."

"I desire nothing for myself," replied Gershom ben Judah. "All that I would have your majesty grant, is the promise that you will always protect the Jews in your kingdom."

The king was greatly surprised, but he readily granted the rabbi's request.

But the treacherous prince was not satisfied.

"Does his majesty think that it is for naught that this Jew refused to take money?" he asked the king.

"What does the prince mean to suggest?" asked the king in return.

"He has stolen sufficient gold and silver and precious stones from all that your treasurer gave him," replied the prince. "Why do you not ask him to weigh all the precious things in the throne, to see

how much less it is than what your treasurer had sent to him?"

The king called Gershom and asked him if he knew how they might weigh the throne.

"I do not know," replied Gershom, "for there are no scales here that are large enough."

The king was satisfied and said nothing more.

When the prince saw that he still failed in his revenge, he decided upon another plan that offered certain success.

Rabbi Gershom had one wife whom he dearly loved. In keeping with the custom of his time, he took unto himself a second wife. It was this second wife that the prince decided to see, to gain her help.

Now, this second wife, Leah, was very weak and deceitful. The prince went to see her and asked her to find out from her husband how the throne could be weighed. She loved jewelry, so she readily accepted gifts from the prince, who easily persuaded her to do what he desired.

When Rabbi Gershom reached his home that evening, Leah, his wife, entreated him to tell her how the throne could be weighed. She wept and wept on his shoulders until he finally told her:

"A boat must be taken into the sea, and the place where the water reaches on it, must be marked. After that has been done, the throne may be placed in the boat. The boat will sink somewhat, because of the heaviness of the throne. They must then mark the line where the water reaches, when the throne is in the boat. They should then re-

move the throne, and put one stone after another into the boat until it sinks to the same line to which the throne had weighted it down. If they will weigh all of these stones, one by one, they will then learn how heavy the throne is."

The next day, when Rabbi Gershom was away, the prince came and Leah told him all that her husband had said.

The king had his treasurer do just what Gershom ben Judah had advised. When the treasurer weighed the stones, he found that the amount was less than the weight of all the gold and silver and jewels he had given to Gershom.

The Rabbi was ordered to appear before the king's judges. At the command of the king, they sentenced him to imprisonment in a tower on some distant island, to die there of starvation. They would not listen to Gershom's plea that he had warned the king about some dishonest workmen, who had helped with the throne.

Rabbi Gershom's first wife would not rest until she had discovered where her husband had been imprisoned. At last she came to the tower. As she stood below, she cried out:

"My dear husband, your wife Sarah is here."

Gershom ben Judah listened. He heard the call once more. It was, indeed, the voice of his wife, Sarah! He rushed to a secret door that he had discovered, leading to the roof of the tower. He rushed up to the roof and looked down and saw his beloved there.

"Make me a rope and toss it to me," he shouted.

In a few days she had made it, and by means of a tree near by, she was able to throw it over to Gershom. Out of this rope, he made a ladder and descended from the tower. They entered the little boat in which Sarah had come, and reached shore in safety. They did not return to their former home, but went elsewhere to live.

Now the treacherous prince had been a very boastful man. When Gershom was sentenced, the prince cried out in great glee: "Even your own wife, Leah, obeyed my will." Rabbi Gershom understood. He knew that it was his second wife, Leah, who had helped the prince in his plot.

His second wife never returned to him, for she realized that she had helped in his downfall. As Rabbi Gershom reached his new home, he said to his wife: "Hereafter, I shall advise every man of Israel to take unto himself but one wife. In these lands of Germany and France, each man has but one wife, unlike the Mohammedans and those Jews who live in Mohammedan lands. We shall do likewise."

Thereafter every Jew had but one wife. Rabbi Gershom ben Judah thus made every wife happier, for she would have a home all her own.

THE JEWS AND THEIR ARABIAN NEIGHBORS

Samuel and the Jealous Arab

Samuel ibn Nagdela was the leading Jew in the city of Granada, in Spain. His people loved and honored him, and called him Samuel Hanagid, or "Samuel, the Prince," He was also one of the royal ministers of the Mohammedan Caliph in Granada.

Every day Samuel could be seen coming out of the palace with the caliph. Next to the palace there was an Arabian who kept a shop and sold spice. This Arabian became very jealous of Samuel, because of the many honors that this Jewish prince was receiving from the ruler of that land.

One day, as Samuel and the caliph passed this little shop, the Arab said many unpleasant things about Samuel and even cursed him. This happened every day and the caliph became very angry.

"My friend, Samuel," said the caliph, "I want you to punish this Arab. He must not insult you any more. I shall ask you to cut out his tongue, so that he shall never be able to say a word."

When Samuel left the caliph that day, he was

worried. He was a very tender-hearted man and could not bear the thought of doing anything cruel or painful. "How can I obey the caliph's command and yet not torture this thoughtless Arab?" Samuel asked himself, as he sat in his home.

Suddenly he thought of a plan. He sent his messenger to the Arab, asking him to come to his home. When the Arab entered his door, Samuel walked toward him and greeted him with a very pleasant smile.

They sat down and Samuel began to talk. He told the Arab about the many interesting trips he had taken through northern Africa and to strange parts of Europe. He took him into his den and showed him the many precious things he had brought back with him from these countries. The Arab seemed so delighted that Samuel asked him to take some of these valuable treasures with him to adorn his own little home.

A few days later, as the caliph and Samuel passed the little shop, the Arab ran toward them and bowed himself to the ground and greeted them in a very friendly way. When the caliph saw this, he stopped in surprise. "Samuel, have you disobeyed my command?" cried out the caliph, in great anger.

"No," answered Samuel, "I have done just as you ordered. I have taken out his harsh and wicked tongue, and have given him a tongue that is kind and soft. I know he will speak kindly to me and to others all his life."

Ibn Gabirol

Solomon ibn Gabirol, a Jewish poet and teacher, lived in Spain. It is said that a Moorish poet became very jealous of Gabirol, slew him and hid his body underneath a fig tree, which soon bore such wonderful fruit that the caliph was eager to know the reason. His servants dug under the tree and found the body of Gabirol. The following poem by Heinrich Heine, tells this story:

Great Gabirol, true and loyal,
God-devoted minnesinger,
Pious nightingale who sang not
To a rose, but to his God—

Now at Cordova, his city,
Dwelt a Moor, his next-door neighbor,
Who wrote verses too and envied
Sore the poet his renown.

He enticed his hated rival
To his house by night, and slew him,
And behind the house, the body
In a garden plot he buried.

But behold! From out the ground
Where the body had been hidden
Sprang a fig tree forth, and blossomed—
Tree of great and wondrous beauty.

Of a curious length its fruit was,
And of strange and spicy sweetness,
And who ate thereof sank swooning
In a trance of dreamy rapture.

Then this marvel among fig trees
By the caliph's self was tested,
Who appointed a commission
To investigate the matter.

They proceeded straight to business,
Gave the owner of the fig tree
Sixty strokes upon the soles
With the bamboo; forced confession;

To the fig tree went and tore it
By its roots from out the ground,
And discovered hid beneath it,
Poor Gabirol's murdered body.

This with pomp and state was buried
And lamented by the brethren,
And that day the Moor was taken
And at Cordova was hanged.

A LOVER OF ZION

In ancient Spain, men wrote letters to one another in poetry. This custom was started by the Arabs of that land. The man who could not write a letter in poetry, was thought to be ignorant.

The Jews of Spain liked this custom. Whenever they would go on a trip, they would tell their friends about it in a poem. Whenever they attended a celebration, they described it to their people in a poem. Whenever they saw beautiful scenery, they would paint that scene in words. It was no wonder, then, that among the Jews were some of the most famous poets of Spain. Most beloved of all was the poet, Jehuda Halevi.

Born in the city of Toledo, in the Spanish kingdom of Castile, Jehuda Halevi went to school at a very early age. When he was quite a young man, he became a physician. He was so popular and so beloved, that he was a very busy physician and had but little time for his poetry. In a letter to a friend, Halevi said: "I am busy at day and at night, caring for people who are sick. But when I think how cruel the rulers here are, I feel that I would rather cure the minds of these kings. There is but one

medicine that will help them—and that is, wisdom. I could drink all day from the fountain of wisdom."

And Jehuda Halevi drank the waters of wisdom, more and more each year. He wrote books about his religion, the religion of Judaism. His heart always turned to Jerusalem, that holy city where the great teachers of Israel once taught and where its magnificent Temple had once stood. He hungered to see it. He thought of it in his dreams at night. His mind would try to picture that sacred city and the Holy Land at every hour of the day. He wrote poem after poem, expressing his love for Zion, as the Holy Land was called. He wished that he might have the wings of an eagle, so that he might fly to that land:

"O city of the world, with sacred splendor blest,
My spirit yearns to thee from out the far-off West;
Had I an eagle's wings, straight would I fly to thee,
Moisten thy holy dust with wet cheeks streaming free."

His love for Palestine was as strong as the love of our ancient fathers, who stood by the rivers of Babylon and wept because they had been driven from their homes. With them he said: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I set not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy." The beauty of Spain meant nothing to him. The dust of the Temple at Jerusalem, destroyed though it was, was the greatest treasure in the world!

He wrote more and more poems, and he hoped that thousands of Jews in Spain would want to go with him to Palestine to live there. But no one seemed to care.

He was sixty years old, and he decided to go alone. He left the college he had built at Toledo. He left his only daughter and his grandson, whom he dearly loved. He left his friends and his pupils. He could no longer wait. He wanted to see the Holy Land and to die in that sacred place.

What a rough trip it was! The sea was stormy. The boat was small, too small to rest in or to sleep. The waves tossed it back and forth, and up and down. But the rough sea did not worry him, for he was happy when he thought how much nearer he was getting to the land of Zion.

The boat reached the city of Alexandria, in the land of Egypt, just before the festival of Succoth. He decided to stay there for a few days, just long enough to recover his strength, for the sea voyage had made him ill. The people were so kind to him, that he spent three months there. They begged him to remain, but he told them he could not forget why he had left Spain and where he was going.

At last he reached Palestine, the land of his dreams. Poor Jehuda Halevi, how disappointed he was when he saw Jerusalem! His heart almost broke. Though he knew that its beautiful Temple was no longer there, only one of its walls and a heap of dust; though he knew that the sacred city had been destroyed by the Romans—he cried when he

looked about him. The Jews who were there were so few and they did not seem to care. They were not even happy to think that they lived in the land that was sacred to the Jew. They did nothing to make it as beautiful as it once had been. The people who ruled over the city were not Jews and they did not even seem to welcome him.

Jehuda Halevi left Jerusalem and wandered over the hills of Palestine. As he lay with his face to the ground, singing one of his songs of sorrow and crying over the sad fate that had come to the land he loved, an Arab dashed over him with his horse and pierced him with his spear. His wish had come true. He died on the sacred soil of Zion, but to this day no one knows his resting place.

THE GLOBE-TROTTER

In the days when there were no railroads, steamships, automobiles or airplanes, people did not travel so far or often. The man who could say that he had seen even one country other than the land of his birth, was envied by his neighbors.

Abraham ibn Ezra, of Spain, was one of the few great travelers of his day. In truth, he was a real globe-trotter. There were very few countries that he had not visited or lived in. At times he could be seen riding on the back of a mule, over the mountainous paths from France to Italy. Sometimes it was on the back of a camel, across the sands of Northern Africa. Even the land of England was not unknown to him, for he had crossed the rough and stormy English Channel on a storm-tossed sailing vessel.

People everywhere welcomed him, for he was so witty and full of fun. He had many interesting tales to tell, and old men as well as young men, women and children, loved to gather around him and listen to his stories. He was very learned, too, and had written a geography, a book on the stars, and also a book about algebra. He also wrote many

books about the Bible. Last, but not least, Abraham ibn Ezra was a great poet.

No one ever knew when this great traveler might knock at his door. It is said that the poet, Jehuda Halevi had a beautiful daughter. When she became a tall, young woman, her mother said to Halevi: "You seem to forget that you have a daughter."

"Why do you accuse me of such thoughtlessness?" inquired Halevi.

"She is our only daughter, and yet you have not provided a husband for her," declared his wife. "People will soon laugh at us and at her, and they will begin to talk about us, if we do not have her married before many months pass."

Almost every day, Jehuda Halevi would hear his wife remind him of his duty toward his daughter. At last, in desperation, he exclaimed: "The first man who enters our home, shall be offered her hand in marriage."

On that very same day, a traveler, dressed very shabbily, came to the door. No Jew, no matter how poor or how ragged he was, was ever turned away from Halevi's home.

"Enter, stranger and brother," said Halevi.

Just as the man crossed the threshold, Jehuda Halevi remembered the vow he had made earlier in the day. He trembled as he thought that this man was to be his daughter's husband. Moreover, this stranger seemed so ignorant and so uncouth. His wife, as can well be imagined, hid her tearful eyes

in her hands, as she caught a glimpse of this strange looking guest and thought of her daughter.

"Worry not, my dear one," said Halevi, as he tried to soothe his wife. "I shall teach him and he shall become a son-in-law of whom we shall be proud."

Months passed and the man was still in their home, waiting for the time when he was to marry Halevi's daughter. One day Jehuda was working on a Purim song. When he came to its very end, there was one more word that he needed and it would not come to his mind! Try as hard as he might, his thoughts could not help him. In despair, he left his table and the song, and lay down to rest, to see if he could refresh his tired brain.

The stranger saw how puzzled Halevi was, as he passed into another part of the house. At night when every one was fast asleep, the stranger quietly made his way into Halevi's study. There, on the table lay the unfinished song. In just a few moments, the missing word came to his mind and he immediately wrote it down.

The next morning, Jehuda arose and went straight to his study. He was still worried about that one word. As he picked up the paper and saw the song finished, he was amazed. Suddenly, he cried out: "Either an angel or Abraham ibn Ezra must have written that word!"

The stranger came forward and said: "In truth, I am Abraham ibn Ezra."

IN THE NAME OF GOD

The Jews ran into their homes. They hid in their cellars and in their attics. They dared look out only through the cracks and crevices in their homes and shops.

It was a sunny day in May, in the land of Germany, many hundred years ago. Nathan ben Aaron had just fled from the city of Worms, where hundreds of Jews had been killed.

"The crusaders are coming," cried Nathan, weak and faint, to the first Jew he met on the streets of Mayence.

The crusaders! O what terror their name put into the heart of every Jew! They had been told of Peter the Hermit, who had just returned from Jerusalem and was riding all over Europe, barefooted, clothed in a very coarse garment, riding on an ass and carrying a huge cross, speaking to Christians in churches, in streets or in the market places. They had heard of his story, that the Mohammedan Turks were destroying everything in Jerusalem that was holy and sacred to the Christian, and that Christian visitors or pilgrims to the city were cruelly treated. Thousands of Christians through-

out Europe answered his plea to take Jerusalem away from the Turks. But these crusaders, as they were called, did not wait until they reached Jerusalem. They began their war-like attacks while they were marching from city to city. And the Jews were the ones that suffered.

Now they were on their way to Mayence! What were the poor Jews to do!

While a few Jewish fathers were meeting in the home of their rabbi, a messenger came from Archbishop Ruthard. The messenger informed them that the archbishop had heard of their excitement and fear, and was ready to hide all the Jews in his palace until the danger was over. Over 1,300 of them went to the palace and hid in its cellars. Little did they suspect that this archbishop, who was a close friend of Count Emmerich, the leader of the crusaders, had led them into a trap.

On the very next morning, just at daybreak, a great noise was heard outside of the palace. There were Count Emmerich and his blood-thirsty crusaders.

"The Jews are here! We want every one of them!" cried out the Count.

It is true that the archbishop had put a few soldiers on guard outside of the palace, but he did this only to make the Jews believe that he was really going to defend them. As the crusaders came closer to the doors of the palace, the soldiers made no attempt to stop them. They merely stepped aside and allowed them to rush into the building.

What a terrible scene it was! Old men and young men, mothers with their babes, their daughters and their sons, were all slain by the sword. Over a thousand precious souls who had not a weapon in their hands, had been betrayed by one whom they trusted, in the name of religion and in the name of the archbishop's God.

There were sixty Jews in the city who had hidden in a church, and after the crusaders had gone, they fled. On their way, they, too, were captured and killed, all but four, who had been frightened into accepting the Christian religion. These four were Uriah and Isaac and his two daughters.

A few days passed and Isaac began to think: "What a coward I was to give up my religion, just to save my life!"

It was the night before Shabuoth, the festival of Pentecost, the day when the whole people of Israel promises to remain forever true to its religion. Isaac could not bear to remember that he had forgotten that promise when he gave up his Judaism. So that very same evening he set fire to his own home and his two daughters died in the flames. He then walked slowly away to meet Uriah and both of them went to the synagogue. They set fire to it at once, and, standing amid the flames before the ark of God, they cried out: "Shema Yisroel, Adonoy Elohenu, Adonoy Echod! Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!"

IN THE YEAR OF FLYING

Since the days of Johanan ben Zakkai, Akiba and Bar Cochba, the Jews everywhere hoped for the time when a leader, a Messiah, would take them back to Jerusalem. It was believed that this man would be sent by God and that he would be a descendant of King David. Very often, men would rise and declare they were the Messiahs that the people were waiting for.

Only a few years after Jehuda Halevi, that great lover of Zion had made his trip to Palestine, a boy was born in the land of Kurdistan, near Persia. His name was David Alroy. He was of handsome appearance, keen in mind and unusually courageous.

One day he left his home and when he returned his former neighbors and friends in the town of Amadia marvelled at his great knowledge. But none marvelled more than did Zain-Eddin, the commander of the strong castle of this town.

At this very time, the city of Jerusalem was held by the Turks, and many Christian nations of Europe were trying to conquer it and take it. David Alroy heard of these battles around Jerusalem, and

suddenly expressed a great desire to recapture that holy city for his own people, the Jews.

But David Alroy needed an army. He knew that there was only one way to get it. He would have to make the people believe that he was the Messiah, promised by God, to lead them back to Jerusalem. And so he sent a letter to all the Jews in Asia, telling them that their Messiah had come and asking them to join his army. He requested them to meet him in his home city, Amadia, and to bring swords and other weapons concealed under their wide and flowing robes. He had made up his mind, first of all, to capture the castle in his city and then put his army into it.

There were many people who readily believed he was the Messiah, and they came from great distances to see this man of whom everyone was speaking. When the great number of men and women entered the town, the commander of the castle thought they had only come to hear the wisdom of the great teacher and scholar, David Alroy.

Before they could begin their attack on the castle, David Alroy received a letter from the sultan, ruler of the Turks and of the country in which he lived, asking him to appear before his throne. David Alroy went, not suspecting that any harm might come to him.

"Are you the Messiah of the Jews?" asked the sultan.

"I am," answered Alroy.

"Do you believe that your God wants you to take Jerusalem from us, and to lead your people there?" asked the sultan again.

"I do," replied the hero of Amadia.

"Cast him into prison," ordered the sultan, "while my counsellors decide what shall be done with him."

It is said that while the sultan and his advisers were still deciding in the council chamber, David Alroy suddenly appeared before them, having freed himself in some mysterious way.

"I do not fear you nor your ministers," cried out Alroy to the sultan.

"Seize him!" demanded the sultan.

People declare that Alroy at once made himself invisible and disappeared from the castle. In one day he made the journey back to Amadia, which usually required ten days. How surprised his army and his followers were when they saw him once more in their midst!

In the meantime, two men appeared in the city of Bagdad and showed some mysterious letters to all the people. These letters, they claimed, had been written by David Alroy, and they announced the exact time when the Jews everywhere would fly to Jerusalem. The people gave these two dishonest men all their money, jewelry and other valuables, for they claimed they alone knew what to do with things the people could not carry with them when they flew.

At a certain hour of the night, hundreds of Jews in the city of Bagdad, clad in green robes, went to

the roofs of their houses. Hour after hour passed, and the men, women and children were in great anxiety, waiting and waiting for the exact moment when they would suddenly find themselves flying and flying away.

Morning came and the people were still on the roofs, but the two dishonest men had escaped with all their precious things. When they discovered that the men had gone, they realized that they had been deceived. Ever afterward, the Jews of Bagdad called that year "the year of flying."

Now David Alroy was still in Amadia, but the sultan made a threat that frightened the Jews throughout his empire. The Turkish ruler declared that if the Jews would not make Alroy give up his army and his plans of capturing Jerusalem, he would kill their men, women and children in all his kingdom.

The Jews, afraid for their lives, wrote letters to Alroy, begging him to give up all his ideas. But Alroy would not listen.

Finally, Zain-Eddin, commander of the castle, thought of a way to get rid of Alroy. He persuaded the father-in-law of Alroy that, if the Jews were to be saved from slaughter, he must kill this man who thought he was a messiah. One night, while Alroy slept, the father-in-law crept upon him and slew him.

David Alroy was no more, but for many years some Jews still believed that he had been the messiah sent by God to his people.

WHY A RICH MAN WENT HUNGRY

In ancient days, in the land that we now know as France, there lived a very famous rabbi who was known as Rabbi Isaac. He was the father of that very learned teacher Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, or Rashi, as he is called.

Rabbi Isaac was a very poor man, for the little that he earned as merchant was not enough for his dear wife and himself. Very often there would be days when he would not have enough money to buy even a loaf of bread. Yet he would tell no one. He was proud and he would not accept charity. He knew that some day things would be better for him and for his wife.

One day Rabbi Isaac decided to go to the docks in the city's harbor and see whether he could not sell some of his goods to the men who came on the boats with their grain. He walked along the edge of the river with his head bowed down, and suddenly he lifted his eyes! Something in the sand was shining most brilliantly. There in the sand lay a precious stone—as big as a pear. Rabbi Isaac picked it up and quickly ran to his home.

"It is a very valuable stone," said his wife, who

knew much about gems and stones. "I am sure you will get one thousand shekels of gold for it."

Rabbi Isaac did not trust himself with the jewel, so he asked his wife to take it to the dealer in precious stones. When the merchant saw it, he cried out: "Where did you get this gem? I have tried for years to get one like it, to match one that I have."

"Will you, please, tell me," asked Rabbi Isaac's wife, "why you are so eager to have this stone?"

"O surely," replied the dealer. "The king of this land is making a very large idol and its two eyes are to have the most valuable stones in this land. I bought one of them many months ago, but I have looked in vain for another one like it. That is why I am ready to give you almost any amount of money for it."

When the wife of Rabbi Isaac heard that he wanted the stone for one of the eyes of an idol, she became very angry. She would not let the dealer see her anger, so she said to him: "I cannot sell the stone before I ask my husband whether you have offered me enough money." And she left.

As she returned home, she found her husband studying the Bible. She told him what had happened and why she had refused to sell the stone.

"You have done wisely in not selling the stone, since it would be used for the eye of an idol," said Isaac. "For our Bible commands us: 'Thou shalt not make any image.' I would rather suffer hunger than sin against God."

When Isaac sent word to the dealer that he would not give him the stone, this man became very angry. He had hoped to get rich by selling the image to the king. The jeweler's wife went at once to the mayor of the city and told him that Isaac had a very brilliant stone which he refused to sell.

The next morning, the mayor sent for Isaac. "I must make a journey by boat to a city nearby, to buy some grain," said the mayor. "I should like to have you come with me and help me buy it. I shall pay you for your work."

Isaac did not for a moment stop to think that the mayor was leading him into a trap. So he went with him on the boat.

After they had sailed far from the shore, the mayor asked Isaac: "Is it true that you have such a precious stone? I have heard that there is no stone, even among kings, as brilliant as it is."

"Yes, it is true," replied Isaac. "I found it upon the banks of the river."

"Tell me your price," said the mayor. "I shall give you whatever you ask."

As the mayor talked and talked to him, begging him to sell, Isaac took the stone out of his pocket and held it high in his hand. A strong wind was blowing and it suddenly blew the stone out of his hand into the bottom of the river.

How happy Isaac was to think that the mayor would not have the stone, which he intended to sell to the jeweler with the idol! The mayor was sad, but Isaac, though hungry, was glad.

THE RABBI AND THE BISHOP

Many years ago there lived in the land of France a very famous rabbi, Solomon ben Isaac, who is better known as Rashi. He loved to travel, so he left the French city of Troyes, in which he lived, and went to Italy, Egypt, Palestine and many other countries.

While he was in Palestine he met a priest with whom he talked about religion. The priest would tell him why he was a Christian, and Rashi would explain why he was a Jew. They spent many pleasant hours together in such conversations at the inn, where they were stopping.

One day the priest became very ill and there was no one in the city who was able to cure him. Rashi remembered some of the medicines that his father had taught him to prepare. He watched each day and night at the priest's bedside, and, when he found out what his sickness was, he gave him a certain medicine that he had made.

"How can I thank you?" asked the priest. "You have been so very kind to me. I shall give you anything you ask."

Rashi would not listen: "You owe me nothing. Though we belong to different religions, we are brothers and belong to the same family of God, who is our Father. All I ask is when you meet a Jew who is in misfortune, help him as gladly as I have helped you."

After leaving Palestine, Rashi's travels brought him to the city of Prague in Bohemia. When the people heard the news of his coming, they rushed to the synagogue to welcome and to see this famous rabbi. So happy were the people to see him and so great was their rejoicing, that the Duke Uratislov, of that city, became very jealous.

"Why do these Jews honor this stranger? I shall show them that I am more powerful than he is," said the angry duke. He called several of his soldiers and ordered them to go to the synagogue. "Wait for this stranger outside of the synagogue," commanded he, "until he has finished speaking to the people. Then arrest him."

The people were quietly leaving the synagogue, talking to each other about the wonderful wisdom of this French rabbi, some of whose writings they had read. As Rashi came forward, with the rabbi of the city at his side, the soldiers seized him and brought him before the duke at his palace.

"My adviser, the bishop, will ask you a few questions," cried out the duke. "We must know why you came here, who you are and in what country you live."

Rashi had been treated so roughly by the soldiers that he could hardly hold up his head. He was so weak.

As the bishop began to question him, he looked at the rabbi in surprise. "Are you Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes? Are you indeed, the one who had saved my life in Palestine?" he asked.

Rashi nodded his head very feebly and said: "Yes, your eminence, I am."

The bishop turned to the duke and told him how this rabbi had cured him when he had been on a journey in Palestine.

"What a noble and good-hearted man he must be!" exclaimed the duke. "I shall set him free at once and give him my protection as long as he is here."

In the meantime, the people of the city had attacked the Jews in the Jewish quarter, for the Jews had to live in a certain part of the city and nowhere else. They had seen the soldiers of the duke take the famous visitor prisoner, and they knew that the duke would not care what the soldiers would do to the other Jews.

Word of the attack had been brought to Rashi. "Do not free me," cried Rashi, as he fell at the feet of the duke. "Free my people and save them from their enemies."

The duke at once mounted Rashi on a horse and sent several of his soldiers with him. They drove rapidly to the Jewish quarter and when the people

saw the soldiers with Rashi, the Jewish stranger, they fled and ran back to their homes.

Rashi's kindness to the bishop had saved hundreds of his fellow-Jews from suffering and death, for the bishop had kept his promise which he had made in Palestine. A few days later Rashi returned to France in peace.

A PHYSICIAN AND HIS PEN OF TRUTH

I

The men looked at one another in amazement. Those who did not know him exclaimed: "Whose son is he?"

Young Moses, the son of Maimon, had just finished a brief address before a large congregation on a Sabbath morn, in the synagogue of Cordova, Spain. His words closed with this earnest prayer: "O Heavenly Father, how I love Thy Torah! Its thoughts are with me by day and by night. May they be a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path, throughout all my days."

His father, who had been standing nearby, pressed a kiss on the forehead of his son, Moses, who had just become *bar mitzvah.*

Throughout all his boyhood days, Moses, the son of Maimon, or Moses Maimonides, as he was called, had been taught by some of the most famous rabbis of Spain, including his own father, who was a very wise man. He loved the city of Cordova, but he and his father's family did not enjoy much peace shortly

after his *bar mitzvah*. One army of Mohammedans from Africa came and fought against the Mohammedans of Cordova. Since these battles lasted for several years, the father took his family and started wandering about from country to country. They finally went to North Africa and settled in the country of Morocco, in the city of Fez.

"Shall we never find peace?" cried the father, as the Mohammedans in Fez began to persecute the Jews for not accepting their religion.

So the family decided on another journey. Now their destination was Palestine, the land that once belonged to their ancient fathers. For six days their vessel sailed on a calm sea. Then arose a great storm and it seemed certain that the boat would be wrecked and all on board would be lost. Fortunately the danger passed. In gratitude, Moses Maimonides promised to fast every year thereafter on the fourth and tenth days of the Hebrew month, Iyar.

"God was with us on these days and saved us," said Moses, "and I shall never fail to thank Him. I shall always sit alone on these memorable days, and pour out to Him my songs of praise and gratitude."

They sailed on the Mediterranean Sea for one whole month, and at last came to the coast of Palestine, to the city of Acre. Every member of the family was so weary and so worn out because of all they had endured for the past two years, that they decided to remain in Acre for several months, to

regain their health and strength. They enjoyed breathing the air of this ancient land, once the home of the Jews. In their joy, they decided to observe the day of their landing in Acre, the third day of Sivan, which happened to be the sixteenth day of May, as an annual family festival.

"God has saved us from the hands of the Mohammedans in Morocco, and we are now free to follow our own religion," said the father of Moses.

The family decided to continue its trip to Jerusalem, and on the sixth of Marcheshvan, the seventeenth day of October, they arrived in the sacred city. They spent three days visiting all the interesting places and ruins of Jerusalem, and also stopped to pray at the Wailing Wall, where Jews in that city still go to pray each year on the Ninth Day of Ab, the day when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Romans. It is said that the Wailing Wall is the only wall left standing of the Temple of King Solomon, who ruled the land of Israel three thousand years ago. From there, they went to the city of Hebron, and visited the tombs of the old Hebrew patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the Cave of Machpelah.

Though Moses and his father loved Palestine, they could not make up their minds to remain and live there, for there were so few Jews in that land at the time.

"Where shall we go?" asked the father.

Moses thought for a while and said: "Let us go to the land of Egypt, for there are many Jews there.

I have also heard that the Mohammedan ruler, Saladin, welcomes the Jew and is very kind to our people." And to Egypt they went, finally settling in Fostat, a suburb of the great city of Cairo.

Within a few years, two great honors came to Moses Maimonides. The Jews of Cairo soon recognized the wisdom and great knowledge of Maimonides and made him their leader. Saladin's governor of Egypt, Vizier Alfadhel, observed that Maimonides also knew a great deal more about medicine than most physicians in Egypt. So Moses became the private physician to Alfadhel at the royal court in Cairo.

II

The fame of Maimonides as a physician spread as rapidly as his fame for wisdom. It is said that Richard, the Lion Hearted, king of England, who was then leading the Christian armies of Europe against the city of Jerusalem, to capture it from the Turks, asked Maimonides to go to England with him and be the royal physician. Maimonides refused to leave Cairo and his true friend, the Vizier Alfadhel.

Strange to say, Maimonides was not at all satisfied to be a physician. He did so only because he had to earn his living for himself and for his family. He was more interested in studying and in writing books. A letter he wrote to a friend shows how busy he really was and how he wished his duties as physician would not take so much of his time:

"I live at Fostat and my royal master is at Cairo.

These two places are about one mile and a half distant from each other. My duties at the court are very heavy. I must visit Alfadhel every day, early in the morning. If he or his children or any member of his family is ill, I dare not leave Cairo, but must remain in the palace for the greater part of the day. I do not return to Fostat until the afternoon.

"By that time, I am almost dying with hunger. When I reach my home, I find the ante-room filled with people, Jews and Mohammedans, nobles and others, who are waiting for me to give them medical care. When night falls, I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak."

Though his life as a physician was a busy one, he could have been far happier if he had done nothing else but heal people. But Maimonides had a pen, the pen of truth. He had studied the Bible, the Talmud and many other Jewish books. He had read the writings of the greatest scholars of the Mohammedan Arabs. His mind was full of new thoughts about his religion, the religion of Judaism, and he wanted to teach them to his people.

Maimonides saw many things among the Jews of Egypt that he did not like. His fine soul was jarred by the careless way in which the men in the synagogues would shout their prayers, everybody singing at one time with a great noise and none of them reciting together and in unison. It was especially after certain silent prayers that they talked to one another and paid no attention to the reader. To do away with this disorderly manner of praying,

he suggested a plan of having one man, a reader, sing all the silent prayers, one after another, without any interruption by the men in the congregation.

Another custom of that day, which he disliked, was the habit of the men to take a bath before every prayer service. Maimonides objected to it because it was a Mohammedan custom and had been copied by the Jews. He also laughed at the many superstitions of those days.

Yet these were but small things. There were important questions about which he had new ideas. He took his pen and wrote one book after another. The greatest of them all was his last book, "The Guide to the Perplexed." In this book he expressed his opinions on many matters of the Jewish religion. His pen was a fearless one. He wrote the truth as he saw it, for his soul was a courageous one.

Unfortunately, the Jews had not learned a lesson from their Christian and Mohammedan tormentors. When this great book of Maimonides was read by Jewish teachers, many began to persecute him. Rabbis ordered their people not to read the book, and threatened with excommunication from the Jewish community all those who would be found studying it.

Jonah Gerondi was one of the rabbis who threatened his people with excommunication, which meant that no Jew, even his wife or child, could speak to the one excommunicated or do business with him. He and other rabbis, were not satisfied with their progress, so they appealed to the Christian priests.

"We see," said these rabbis, "you are burning your heretics. Persecute our heretics who read this dangerous book. If you will burn every copy of this book that is found, you will frighten our people and they will never again read it."

The priests did not wait. They immediately searched the Jewish homes in many cities, and they found several copies. These they burned in the public square of the city.

When Maimonides was told of what was happening, he only said: "Honor bids me keep away from fools. It is better for me to spend my time in teaching those who are willing to learn than to waste it upon those who do not understand."

Maimonides had many friends who came to his rescue and defended his book. They could not believe that rabbis such as Jonah Gerondi and others would be so bitter and so unkind as to appeal to the Christian priests to help them in their attack against Maimonides. How could they have asked priests to decide what is true or false in the religion of Judaism or in any Jewish book!

The surprising thing then happened. The congregations of these teachers pronounced the same punishment of excommunication on their own rabbis. "Let no one speak to these traitors in Israel," read their messgae to the people.

Moses Maimonides lived many years after he had written this wonderful book that had stirred up so much trouble and misunderstanding. He spent

the last years of his life in his work as physician; in answering letters from people in many countries who wanted his opinion on religious questions; and in meeting the Jewish men of his city in the synagogue every Sabbath, to discuss some Jewish book or Jewish law.

When he died, all Egypt mourned for him, and his body was taken to Palestine to be buried in the city of Tiberias. It was said of him: "From Moses to Moses (Maimonides) there was none like unto Moses."

Shortly after Maimonides had died, Rabbi Jonah Gerondi realized how wrong and unfair he had been to this great physician and thinker. For the first time it dawned on him what a terrible act it had been to say bitter things about this wonderful man and to burn his books.

One day he arose in the synagogue of the city of Gerona, in Spain, and prayed: "I pray before this congregation of Israel that God may forgive me. I knew not, until now, how wrong I had been. If God will grant me the strength, I will go to the tomb of Maimonides and implore the pardon of that great and noble soul." He went to the synagogues in Paris and in Montpellier, in the country of France, and made the same confession.

In a few days, he set sail for Palestine. When he reached the tomb of Moses Maimonides, Rabbi Jonah Gerondi was clothed in deep black. Ten persons, as witnesses, stood about him as he fell down before the grave and cried out: "Forgive me, O

Moses, the son of Maimon! My master, let thy soul have mercy on me. Forgive, forgive!"

Rabbi Jonah lay there for many moments, but when he arose, it was with a heart that was newborn.

THE JEW SPEAKS

"He speaks Hebrew very well and they say he is a Jew," said one of the old men, to a group at the synagogue.

They were talking about Pablo Christiani, who was going through Spain to speak to Jews and to make them forsake their religion. Pablo Christiani had once been a Jew and was now a Christian, as his name shows.

The Jews would not have cared if Pablo Christiani had only changed his religion. He was very unkind and untruthful about them. He told the king and the priests many falsehoods about the Jew, so that their lives became more bitter each day. He had even been in France, where he had tried to get the Jews to debate with him whether Jesus was not considered as God in the Bible and the Talmud.

The Jews of Spain at first refused to debate with Pablo Christiani. They knew they could prove the truth of their ideas about Jesus and Christianity, but they were afraid that the Christians might punish them for saying anything about Jesus, as they had done very often before.

Pablo Christiani remembered how unsuccessful he was in France in making Jews debate with him.

So he went to Penyaforte, the priest of King Jayme of Spain, and told him of his wish. He asked the priest to compel Moses Nachmanides, the most famous rabbi in Spain at the time, to come to Barcelona for a debate about Jesus. He explained to Penyaforte that if he converted the rabbi, the rest of the Jews would become Christians at once.

The priest was delighted with the thought that thousands of Jews might become Christians. He had tried it for many years and had failed. Now he might succeed.

With this hope in his mind, the priest spoke to the king. In a few days, Nachmanides received a letter from King Jayme, asking him to come to Barcelona and to debate with this converted Jew.

Nachmanides came, but he was unwilling to debate, for he knew how unfair the king and the priests had always been. He agreed on one condition, that he be allowed to say anything he pleased and anything that his religion had taught him to be true. The king consented and the priest reminded him that he must not say anything about Christianity that would hurt a Christian's feeling. Nachmanides made them understand that he was a gentleman and that Judaism taught him to respect the religions of other people.

So one day in July the debate took place in the city of Barcelona. It was in the palace of the king. There sat King Jayme on his throne and his whole court of nobles all about him. Next to him was Penyaforte, the priest, several bishops and many

priests. The knights were decked in their armour and many Spanish Christians also came to listen. A few brave and fearless Jews, who were there, watched the debate with great eagerness.

As the debate went on, Pablo Christiani said that Jesus was the Messiah and the Prince of Peace that God had promised Israel in the land of Palestine.

Nachmanides replied: "How can we believe that Jesus was the Prince of Peace? Is it not true that there have been more wars in the world since Jesus was born? We have been taught that the Messiah would bring peace and happiness to all men. Our lives have been made more unhappy than they were before Jesus."

Nachmanides turned to the king, and with all his courage, said: "O king, if you were a truly religious man, you would stop all your wars, with their murder and slaughter. Our God has taught us that if we want peace and happiness on earth, we must beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more."

Nachmanides had been so fearless, that many of the Jews begged him to stop debating after it had lasted three long days. They were afraid that the angry priests would take revenge on all Jews. In fact, many of the knights and priests had come to Nachmanides and had warned him not to be too frank in what he said. Some peaceful Christians of Barcelona were just as worried for the Jews as many of the Jews were, and they advised Nachmanides to stop debating if he could.

When the king had been told by Nachmanides what the knights, the Jews and the peaceful Christians had said to him, Jayme ordered the debate to continue. Nachmanides had no choice.

So the debate went on. But Pablo Christiani was so weak before this great rabbi of Israel, that he was defeated. Even the king told Nachmanides that he had shown great skill in defending the Jewish religion and gave him a gift of three hundred maravedis, to show his respect for this fearless teacher.

But Penyaforte was not satisfied. His influence over the king was strong. He made the king give him a letter, which was to be sent to Jews throughout the king's land. In this letter he told them that Pablo Christiani was coming to their city and to their synagogues, and that they must listen to him and debate with him. Penyaforte thought that Pablo Christiani might succeed in some cities where they did not have courageous rabbis and leaders like Nachmanides.

After the debate at Barcelona, many of the priests sent reports to the lands round about and said that Nachmanides had lost and that Pablo Christiani had won. In order that the Jews might have a true story of the debate, Nachmanides wrote a report and sent it to many countries, wherever Jews lived.

The fearlessness of Nachmanides again angered the priests and they accused him before the king. They declared that he had written many untruthful statements about Jesus and the Christian religion in that report. The king called Nachmanides to his

palace and ordered him to defend himself against the charge.

As brave as ever before, Nachmanides admitted that he had written many things that did not agree with Christianity in the report, but that it contained nothing that he had not said before the king and the priests during that long debate with Pablo Christiani.

The king admitted that Nachmanides was innocent of any wrong, but, to satisfy Penyaforte and the other priests, he sentenced the rabbi to leave the land for two years and ordered his pamphlet on the debate to be burned.

Priests everywhere wrote letters to King Jayme, complaining that he had let Nachmanides off too easily. They made it so unpleasant for the Jews that Nachmanides decided not to return after two years.

Nachmanides was seventy years old when he followed the example of Jehuda Halevi and set off for Zion, the holy-land. He left his two sons, his friends and his school.

He, too, was disappointed when he saw the ruins of the land, so sacred to the Jew. But he determined to make it a place where Jews from all parts of the world would be happy to go. He built schools and there taught many young men.

For three years he enjoyed his days in the land of his fathers. When he died, this voice that spoke at Barcelona still continued to speak wisdom and courage to Jews everywhere.

THE RABBI IN THE PRISON TOWER

"The Jews killed little William of Norwich and have nailed him to a cross, to mock our Saviour."

These words were carried from mouth to mouth throughout all England. A few years later, in Germany, the cry arose: "The Jews have killed our children to use their blood for the Passover matzoth."

The Jews did not know what to say. Their religion had always taught them not to shed blood and to hold every life sacred. They believed that all people were God's children, and they had lived true to that teaching. Now they were accused of killing Christian children!

One story that people told one another was about a little boy who, each day, passed through that part of the town where the Jews lived. They said he had a wonderful voice and, as he strutted along, he would sing some of the beautiful songs his Christian teachers had taught him. One day, the story continues, this boy was missing and after a long search his body was found in a well. There he lay, still singing. Then a voice was heard to say: "Take out the little seed that has always been in my throat." As the

seed was taken out, the lifeless boy stopped singing the sacred songs.

What a pity that people believed such stories! They would not stop believing them, even after the Pope, the head of all Christians, had told them that such stories were untrue.

In the city of Ratisbon, in the land of Germany, there lived an old rabbi, Israel Bruna. Jews everywhere wrote to him for advice and for instruction concerning their religion. Gentle teacher though he was, he had enemies who were always plotting against his life.

Throughout his country, the emperor and the dukes were mistreating Bruna's people. They were always doing one of two things—robbing the Jews or forcing them to become Christians. The saddest part of it all was that some treacherous Jews, for a little money, helped the Christian rulers in their ugly tasks.

The German emperor, who had power over the whole country, and a duke, who ruled only some small part of the country, did not always agree. One day, the emperor demanded a big sum of money from the Jews of Ratisbon.

"I shall not permit you to send money to the emperor," declared Duke Louis of Ratisbon, for he wanted to keep it all for himself.

"What shall we do?" exclaimed the Jews. "If we do not give the money, the emperor will persecute us. If we give it, the duke will take vengeance on us."

The emperor waited and waited, and still no money had come from the Jews of Ratisbon. He sent several of his trusted soldiers to the city, with orders to seize Rabbi Bruna, the leader of the Jews, and throw him into prison. He remained there for several days, and after a large sum of money had been collected from the Jews for the emperor, Bruna was set free.

Poor old man! He did not have peace very long. This time his enemy was a Jew, Hans Vayol, who had forsaken his religion and was now helping the Christians to persecute the Jews of that city.

"Israel Bruna has killed a Christian child, to use its blood for the Passover bread," declared Vayol, who was eager to see his people suffer.

Bishop Henry and all the priests of the city believed him. They wanted to believe him, for they were eager for an excuse to punish Bruna and all the Jews.

Bruna was again thrown into prison and there he remained. Even though the Emperor of Germany and the King of Bohemia had asked the duke to free the rabbi, the duke would not listen.

"We cannot free him," declared the duke and his advisers, who feared the bishop and the people of Ratisbon. "He shall be hanged before a week has passed."

For some reason, the German emperor demanded the Bruna's hanging be delayed until his case could be considered by the rulers and bishops of Germany.

The rulers of the city of Ratisbon did not like this order of the emperor.

"If we obey the command of the emperor at this time, he will always expect us to do what he wishes," said the duke. "He shall not decide anything about the Jews of Ratisbon, for the Jews of this city belong to us."

The judges of Ratisbon chose a certain day to make their decision. The Jews trembled, in fear of what might happen to their rabbi.

"Where is Hans Vayol?" demanded the judges.

Hans Vayol stepped forward with great pride, for he fully expected that the judges would ask him to tell his whole story against Bruna. Vayol looked at the mob that was standing about. What a thrill it was to him, to think that he would be asked to speak to such a tremendous crowd! What a hero they would make of him! Hereafter, every one in the city would know him.

"Hans Vayol," began the judges, "we ask you to come with us to the place of execution."

Though Vayol was a little disappointed in not having been asked to tell his story, he still took some satisfaction in the thought that he would have a place of honor at the execution.

Hans Vayol stepped on to the bridge, where all executions of the city took place, and there stood the executioner.

"Hans Vayol," solemnly pronounced the judges, "you are sentenced to die. There is a lie on your

lips. Do you want to die with it or do you want to cast it away by telling the truth? Speak!"

"You Excellencies, I do confess that Israel Bruna did not kill the child," stammered Vayol. "But your own souls know that it is true that some Jews kill Christian children."

Though this traitor still uttered a lie against all of them, the Jews were happy to hear him take back his accusation against Bruna.

"Israel Bruna, you are free," announced the Judges.

As they were about to hang Vayol, a royal messenger on a black horse came riding madly to where the judges sat. He handed them a letter from the emperor.

"Vayol, you shall not be hanged," said the judges. "You must leave the land of Germany at once. Let no man ever again see your face in this empire."

Poor, old Israel Bruna, weak and bent, surrounded by those who loved him, walked slowly to his home.

WITH A SONG ON THEIR LIPS

What an unusual scene! A little Jewish boy was pointing his finger in scorn at a very handsome and nobly dressed Jew who had just passed him.

"Coward! Traitor! Shame on your soul!" shouted the boy.

The man's face reddened with shame and anger. He was a *marano*, one of the many Jews who had accepted the Christian religion and went to church every Sunday with the Christian Spaniards, but observed the Jewish religion in secret.

Many Jews were afraid to be Jews when they saw the Christian rulers of Spain and their priests mistreat and torture many of their people. They thought they could escape harm and even death by pretending to be Christians. Poor, weak men that they were, they still loved their Judaism. Whenever the holiday of Passover would come, they would have the Seder in their home while some one stood on guard to warn them of any Christian spies. They would meet secretly on the Sabbath and recite their prayers just like all other Jews.

As cautious as they were, the *maranos* were always in danger. In order to keep watch on these

New Christians, as these *maranos* were called, the church and the king set up a system called "The Inquisition." It included spies, a court and a plan of torture and cruel punishment. If any one was suspected of observing any other religion after having accepted the Christian religion, he was brought before the Court of Inquisition.

Very often the Inquisitors would have an easy task in discovering the Jewish men and women they suspected. If no smoke came from their chimneys on the the Sabbath, they were still keeping their Judaism! If they insisted on giving Biblical or other Jewish names to their children, they were still loyal to the Law of Moses! If they blessed their children without making the sign of the cross, they were not Christians at heart!

Men who were suspected of these things were seized without warning and dragged before the Court of the Inquisition. In order to compel them to confess, the *maranos* were thrown into dungeons, where their thumbs were twisted with screws or their bodies were bound with cords, which were pulled tighter and tighter with every refusal to confess. Sometimes a rope was placed under his arms or tied to his wrists, and the man was lifted into the air, higher and higher, while the rope tore into his flesh. And when the *maranos* were found guilty, they were burned alive before throngs of people.

When the Spanish priests saw that they could not make these *maranos* remain Christians, in spite of every punishment they put on them, they advised

the king to drive every Jew out of the kingdom of Spain. On March 21st, 1492, the fatal decree was issued by the king. The Jews were ordered to leave in four months.

There was one man who alone might be able to save them. That man was Don Isaac Abarbanel. He had been the treasurer of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

Don Isaac had been born in Portugal and had served as treasurer and diplomat for the kings of that land. There arose a king, Juan II who envied Abarbanel for his wealth and so determined to secure it all for himself. But a royal friend, the Duke Fernando of Braganza, warned Abarbanel. Don Isaac immediately fled to Spain, to the city of Toledo.

He had not been there very long, when King Ferdinand asked him to serve as his Minister of Finance. It was to him that the eyes of all the Jews were now turned.

Don Isaac did not wait a moment. Like Joseph in the palace of Egypt, he felt that he had come to such power and honor only to help his people in their hour of need. He set off at once for the king's palace.

The guards, with their armor and swords, stood aside as Isaac Abarbanel, the royal treasurer, approached the door of the throne room. As he entered, there sat the king and queen on their thrones, decked with their most gorgeous jewels and richest robes.

Don Isaac threw himself at the feet of his royal master and the queen.

"Arise, Don Isaac, and speak forth what is in your heart," urged the king.

"Your Majesty, I cannot stand. My soul and my body are crushed to the ground by the great sorrow that has come over my people," sobbed Isaac.

"My priests and my ministers have advised me that your people has destroyed the faith of many of my loyal subjects. They tell me that as long as there is a Jew in my kingdom, no Christian can keep his religion pure," declared Ferdinand.

Abarbanel knew it was all untrue. He once more entreated the king to spare the Jews and to take back his evil decree. He knew how much this Spanish ruler loved money, so he decided to tempt him. for the sake of his people.

"I shall pay into the king's treasury 30,000 ducats of silver," offered Abarbanel, "if His Majesty will permit my brothers to remain in this land, the land that they love."

The king gazed at Abarbanel. The greatness of the amount staggered him and his brow was knit in thought.

Just as Ferdinand was about to speak, the chief inquisitor, Torquemada, stepped forth, with a crucifix in his hand. "Judas Iscariot sold his master for thirty pieces of silver," roared Torquemada. "Does your majesty want to sell him now for 30,000 ducats? Here he is! Take him and sell him!"

These words settled the fate of the Jews. Ferdinand did not dare to accept the money when he was accused of selling his religion to the Jews.

Four months! How the days did fly! The Jews wept, for they knew that all hope was now gone. They began to sell their beautiful homes, and, very often, all that they could get for them was a mule on which they could ride out the country on their said pilgrimage. Many of the men and women spent each day in the cemeteries, weeping on the graves of their fathers and mothers who had come to this sunny land of Spain, hoping that their children would find happiness forever on its soil.

The fated day came, August 2nd, 1492, on the Ninth Day of Ab, on that same day of the year on which the Temple and its holy city of Jerusalem had fallen in the time of Johanan ben Zakkai.

What a glorious day it was! No people ever displayed such courage in the hour of its greatest disaster. Though some wept, all voices joined in the singing of psalms of praise to God, as the courageous Jewish men blew their trumpets to cheer the hearts of this mighty army of three hundred thousand! The very heavens resounded with a cry that shall never be forgotten as each voice sang out its song of trust and hope in God. "Shema Yisroel Adonoy Elohenu, Adonoy Echod. Be strong and of good courage, O Israel, for thy God is God alone!"

HOW COLUMBUS DISCOVERED AMERICA

"The land of Zipangu is a land of gold!"

All men were talking about this mysterious country in Asia, where gold could be found in great plenty. The land of Zipangu was none other than the islands of Japan, of whose towers of gold Marco Polo, the great traveler, had written so much in his book. One ship after another left the shores of Portugal and Spain, to discover the shortest route to that land of wealth.

Many Jews, such as Abraham Zacuto and Joseph Vecinho, knew a great deal about astronomy and the making of maps. They made many charts which the sailors needed to guide their boats in the right path. It was very dangerous travel, for men did not know much about the seas in those days. Many of the boats that left Spain and Portugal were wrecked, and many returned before their voyage had been completed.

Just at the time that the Jews were having such a bitter time of it in Spain, a man appeared in Portugal. His name was Christopher Columbus. Some say he was an Italian, and others claim that he was a Jew.

Christopher Columbus was eager to find the shortest way to the land of Zipangu, also to the land of Cathay, which we know as China; and to the islands of the Indies, where so many wonderful spices were to be found. The first one whose help he asked was the king of Portugal. But the king of Portugal would not listen.

Columbus then went to the king and queen of Spain. They, too, would not listen, for they were busy with their wars against the Mohammedans and with their persecution of the Jews. All that he could get from them was a position as admiral in the Spanish fleet. While he was admiral, he made three good friends, Abraham Senior, Isaac Abarbanel and Gabriel Sanchez, who held very prominent positions in the kingdom of Spain and had great wealth.

Years passed and still Columbus was not given the fleet for which he had asked in order to sail for the land of Zipangu. He had just decided to go to the king of France with his plan, when a *marano* Jew, Luis de Santangel, offered to help him.

Luis de Santangel went to the king and queen. "Think of what wealth we shall have, when he finds the lands of Zipangu and Cathay!" he exclaimed.

The king and queen were just as stubborn as ever. "We shall not squander our money on such a worthless trip," was the reply.

Santangel finally obtained the royal consent to provide the men and the boats and Santangel himself

promised to give Columbus the five million marevedis that he needed.

The Jews of Spain, who were then suffering so much, were very interested in the plan of Columbus. They longed to find a new land where they could go and, perhaps, live in peace.

On August 3rd, 1492, on the very day after the Jews had been ordered to leave Spain, the king and queen issued a royal decree, giving their permission to Columbus to set sail from Spain with his fleet. When he left the harbor of Palos, Luis de Santangel was there to bid him farewell. With Columbus, were several Jews who were glad to leave the land of Spain, their land of misery. Even some Jewish physicians were among this number.

On October 12th, when Columbus sighted land, the first man who set foot on this new continent was Luis de Torres, a Jew. One of the first men to whom Columbus wrote a letter, telling all about his discovery, was the man Luis de Santangel.

Columbus, to his last day, was convinced that he had found the Indies and the land of Zipangu. He did not seem to realize that he had discovered a new land, the land which we now call America. In that great discovery, the man who had been his truest friend, was that generous Jew of Spain, Luis de Santangel.

HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

FOR THE TEACHER

THE LOST JEWEL

This story does not center about any significant personality in Israel. It affords a glimpse into the life of Jerusalem, including the Temple and the lay community. Its chief interest is the splendid example of a son's love and his thoughtfulness toward his father. The historical setting could be any time within the two centuries preceding the Christian Era.

REFERENCES

On Temple and Community of Jerusalem:
Jack M. Myers: Story of the Jewish People, pp. 37-62.

THE KING AND THE JUDGE

Alexander Jannai ruled the Jewish kingdom during the years 104-87 B. C. E. He was a descendant of the Maccabees and was animated by the same ambitions that had influenced John Hyrcanus (135-105 B. C. E.), the desire for territorial conquest and the extension of his kingdom. This royal policy had alienated the Pharisees, one of the parties in Judea, but received the support of the Saducees, another party of that day. His wars were against the Arab chieftains and Philistia.

The rivalry between the two factions of the Pharisees and Saducees burst forth into riots on several occasions. On the Festival of Succoth, when Alexander Jannai was officiating at a Temple service as high priest—for the ruler was both king and high priest—the Pharisees in the Temple court pelted him with the citrons or *Esrogim* that were used in the Succoth service. Alexander Jannai ordered his guards to charge the mob and 600 pilgrims were massacred within the court of the sacred Temple.

Simeon ben Shetach was the leader of the Pharisees, a fact that accounts for his persecution by Alexander. He was the brother of Salome Alexandra, the queen and wife of Alexander Jannai. On his death-bed, Alexander advised his widow to make peace with the Pharisees and to side with them, and willed his kingdom to her.

REFERENCES

For a discussion of Pharisees and Saducees:

H. Graetz: History of The Jews, Vol. 2, pp. 17-98; Paul Goodman: A History of The Jews, pp. 24-26; Maurice H. Harris: A Thousand Years of Jewish History, pp. 85-87; Lady Magnus: Outlines of Jewish History, pp. 25-33; Martin A. Meyer: Methods of Teaching Post Biblical History, Part I, pp. 89-91; Jack M. Myers: The Story of the Jewish People, Vol. 1, pp. 80-83.

For a complete discussion, consult:

Travers Herford: Pharisaism. Jewish Encyclopedia.

A PRINCE WITH TWO CROWNS

During the period of Hillel (30 B. C. E.—10 C. E.) there were three great Jewish centers: Judea, Babylonia and Egypt. Herod the Great was king of Judea at this time, and was subservient to the Romans. He reduced

the powers of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court, and limited them to religious questions. It was of this exalted body that Hillel became the head or *Nasi*, and through this means contributed to the religious thought and development of his people.

Hillel was very gentle in character and moderate in his religious decisions. He is frequently compared with his contemporary, Shammai, who was very stern and severe. His life affords a splendid contrast to that of the mad Herod. His sympathies were universal, in keeping with the tolerant attitude of many contemporary Jewish teachers and with the spirit of that period when Judaism made many proselytes in the Graeco-Roman world.

REFERENCES

On Hillel:

H. Graetz: History of The Jews, Vol. 2, pp. 96-130; Maurice H. Harris: A Thousand Years of Jewish History, pp. 110-116; Lady Magnus: Outlines of Jewish History, pp. 45-47; Martin A. Meyer: Methods of Teaching Post Biblical History, Part I, pp. 101-2; Jack M. Myers: The Story of the Jewish People, pp. 136-150.

On Sanhedrin:

Jack M. Myers: op. cit., pp. 48-53. Jewish Encyclopedia.

On Schools:

Jack M. Myers: pp. 63-73.

GENTLE HILLEL

(See "A Prince with Two Crowns.")

JOHANAN BEN ZAKKAI AND HIS FAMOUS PUPIL

Upon Herod's death, the Jewish kingdom was divided into three parts. Each division was ruled by Herod's three sons, Archelaus, Herod and Antipas. Roman in-

terference became more frequent and its rule was felt more directly. Then ensued a struggle on the part of the Jewish people to throw off the oppressive Roman yoke.

At the time of Johanan ben Zakkai, Jerusalem was besieged, captured and burned to the ground. With this event, in the year 70 C. E., the Jewish kingdom came to an end. The Jewish people were saved from possible annihilation, in their diffusion and exile, through such schools as had been established by Johanan ben Zakkai and his successors.

REFERENCES

Adele Bildersee: Jewish Post Biblical History, pp. 1-9; Paul Goodman: History of The Jews, p. 46; H. Graetz: History of The Jews, Vol. 2, pp. 322-339; 346; M. H. Harris: A Thousand Years of Jewish History, pp. 183-9; Martin A. Meyer: Methods of Teaching Post Biblical History, pp. 145-151; Jack M. Myers: The Story of the Jewish People, pp. 94-98; 151-166. Jewish Encyclopedia.

A SCHOOL THAT SAVED A NATION

(See "Johanan ben Zakkai and His Famous Pupil.")

RACHEL AND AKIBA, THE SHEPHERD

After the destruction of Jerusalem, the only leaders of the Jews in Palestine were the heads of its Sanhedrin. They assumed the title of Patriarch, and only descendants of the house of Hillel, with the exception of Johanan ben Zakkai, succeeded to it.

Akiba was one of those who opposed the idea of the Jews surrendering their national distinctiveness. He was one of the leaders in the Bar Cochba rebellion (132

C. E.), the final attempt to win independence from Rome. In this war, Akiba died a martyr.

REFERENCES

Adele Bildersee: Post Biblical History, pp. 10-17; Paul Goodman: A History of The Jews, pp. 46-7; H. Graetz: History of The Jews, Vol. 2, pp. 342-436; Maurice H. Harris: A Thousand Years of Jewish History, pp. 206-216; Lady Magnus: Outlines of Jewish History, pp. 81-4; Martin A. Meyer: Methods of Teaching Post Biblical History, pp. 165-170; Jack M. Myers: Story of the Jewish People, pp. 115-116; 171-188. Jewish Encyclopedia.

WHEN GIANTS ROAMED PALESTINE

(See "Rachel and Akiba, the Shepherd")

THE OLD MAN OF BETHAR

(See "Rachel and Akiba, the Shepherd")

STORIES TOLD BY THE RABBIS

(For Akiba, see historical material above)

Rabbi Meir, who was a pupil of Rabbi Akiba, was one of the great spiritual leaders of his age and the author of many fables. Among his most noteworthy contributions to Jewish thought and literature are his collection and writing down of many Jewish traditions, continuing similar work by Akiba and preparing the way for Rabbi Judah (135-220) who compiled the Mishnah.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 18-24; H. Graetz: History of The Jews, Vol. 2, pp. 433-446; Harris: pp. 217-9; Meyer: pp. 175-181; Myers: pp. 189-221.

On Talmud:

Bildersee: pp. 25-47; Magnus: pp. 117-135; Meyer: pp. 193-199; Myers: pp. 117-135.

SCHOOL DAYS IN BABYLON

After the adverse results of the Bar Kochba rebellion in Palestine, the center of Jewish cultural life gravitated to Babylonia. Rab, or "Abba Areka," a Babylonian, one of the heroes of this story, who received his education in Palestine, is said to have inaugurated this cultural era for Babylonia upon his return from the former country in 219 C. E. Sura, Pumbeditha, Nehardea and Machuza became centers of Jewish learning through the increasing influence of their academies. Rab taught in Sura and Samuel was the great teacher in Nehardea. It was through the activities of these academies that the Babylonian Talmud was compiled, whose authority among the Jews was greater than that of the Palestinian Talmud, because of the greater prestige of its schools.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 35-47; G. Deutsch: History of The Jews, p. 33; Goodman: pp. 48-50; 54-55; Graetz: Vol. 2, 545-9; Harris: pp. 232-235; Magnus: pp. 96-105; 109; Meyer: pp. 195-6.

HUNA THE GENEROUS FARMER

Babylonia had been a Jewish center from the time of Jerusalem's fall in 586 B. C. E., when the Babylonians besieged it and carried the leaders of Judah and a considerable part of its population into exile. It was one of the regions to which the Jews would naturally go in the face of such misfortunes as confronted them in Palestine. Huna was one of Babylonia's great teachers, succeeding Rab (see "School Days in Babylon") as head of

the School at Sura. It was he who made the bold step of declaring that Babylonia stood on an equal footing with Judea. "We consider being in Babylon just the same as being in the Holy Land," he declared. Huna was born in 212. It is interesting to note that he had asked to be buried in Palestine, the Holy Land. He was taken there when he died in the year 297, being buried in the vault of Chiya, another great Babylonian. For an explanation of this custom, the reader is referred to Graetz (Vol. 2, p. 548.)

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 25-36; Graetz: Vol. 2, pp. 545-9; Harris: p. 237.

IN A CASTLE OF ARABIA

Jews had been living in the Arabian peninsula, even in periods preceding the Christian era. They lived a tribal life, similar to that of the Arabian tribes. There are traditions that a Jewish state existed in Arabia and that it fell in the year 530. The settlers in this region continued the literary and spiritual activities of their Palestinian ancestors, and they greatly influenced the religious and cultural development of the Arabs. One group, the Yemenites, of southern Arabia, was converted to Judaism about the year 500 C. E.

It was under such Jewish influence, together with that of Christian teachers, that Mohammed laid the foundations of a new faith among the Arabians, in the religion of Mohammedanism, in the year 612.

Before the days of Mohammed, the Arab tribesmen had been accustomed to make pilgrimages to the shrine

of Mecca, where the scenes of this story are partly laid. Samuel ben Adijah is said to have lived during the years immediately preceding the activities of Mohammed.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 49-52; Deutsch: pp. 35-6; Goodman: pp. 55-6; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 68-70; Harris: pp. 296-7; Magnus: pp. 111-115; Meyer: Part 2, pp. 11-16; H. G. Wells: Outline of History, Vol. 2, pp. 1-39; Hendrik Van Loon: The Story of Mankind, pp. 138-143.

THE PRINCE OF CORDOVA

During the greater part of their residence in Babylonia, the Jews had been under Persian rule. With Mohammed there arose a new power—the Mohammedan Empire, which extended its conquests under the sign of the crescent. One of the countries that it soon included within its empire was that of Babylonia. In the year 711, it gained a foothold in Spain.

About the year 1040, activity in the Babylonian schools had practically come to a close, and a new center of Jewish culture had been gradually arising in Spain. Though some Jews had lived in Spain even before its conquest by the Mohammedans, we do not know much about them. The literary treasures of Babylonia were gradually brought to this new European center and many teachers went with them, for the schools had been closed.

One of the first outstanding figures in this new Jewish community of Spain, is that of Chasdai ibn Shaprut, who was in charge of the treasury of the Mohammedan prince, Abderrahman, who was caliph of Cordova dur-

ing the years of 912-961. Chasdai, born in 915, was well-versed in medicine, in languages and in financial matters. He served his royal master as both diplomat and counsellor in the relations of the Mohammedan state with its Christian neighbors. He fostered Jewish scholarship in ever so many directions.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 63-68; Deutsch: pp. 38-45; Goodman: pp. 60; 67-72; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 187-230; Maurice H. Harris: History of the Medieval Jews: pp. 42-3; 58-68; Magnus: pp. 115-134; Meyer: Part 2, pp. 28; 33-36; 127-136; Wells: Vol. 2, p. 168. Jewish Encyclopedia.

THE RABBI WHO SOWED SEEDS OF HAPPINESS

Rabbi Gershom ben Judah was the spiritual leader of one of the earliest Jewish communities in Germany. He was born in France in 960, and, in later years, went to the city of Mayence, where he was rabbi. He was highly revered by the Jews of his day. His commentaries, explaining the Talmud, served to make the Jews in these new lands independent of Babylonia in spiritual advice. They now enjoyed immediate guidance from a learned teacher in their midst. For this reason he was called "Light of the Exile." The spiritual darkness of the European exiles had been dissipated by his efforts. His influence was recognized by the Jewish communities of France, Germany and Italy. His very useful life came to an end in the year 1028.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 130-1; Deutsch: p. 46; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 243-247.

THE JEWS AND THEIR ARABIAN NEIGHBORS

Samuel ibn Nagdela, who had been born in Cordova in the year 993, held a court position under the caliph at Granada. Under his influence the Jewish colleges in that city became very famous. He wrote many books of great worth, including an introduction to the Talmud and on biblical books.

Solomon ibn Gabirol (1022-1070) was a great philosopher and poet, a renowned Greek and Arabic scholar. His work, "The Fountain of Life," greatly influenced the Christian writers and thinkers of his time, and for many succeeding centuries. The poem, by Heine, is woven about the tradition that he was slain at Valencia by an envious Arab poet.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 69-75; Deutsch: p. 149; Goodman: pp. 72-74; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 252-281; Harris: History of the Medieval Jews, pp. 69-83; Magnus: pp. 135-6; 190-193; Meyer: pp. 36-7; 49; 56-7; 66-7; Claude Field: Jewish Legends of the Middle Ages, pp. 52-62.

A LOVER OF ZION

Judah Halevi, unlike the previous great Jews of Spain, had been born under Christian dominion in the year 1086, in the city of Toledo, the capital of the Christian kingdom of Castile. He lived at a period when the struggle of the Christian rulers of Spain to drive out the Mohammedans from the Iberian peninsula, was very bitter. Judah Halevi lived during the period of the Crusades, which will be considered in the following story.

He was an ardent lover of the land of his Palestinian fathers. He won fame both as a philosopher and poet, and his occupation was that of physician.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 84-94; Deutsch: p. 49; Goodman: p. 74; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 310-342; Maurice H. Harris: pp. 93-106; Magnus: pp. 136-139; 198-203; Meyer: pp. 58-9; 68-9.

THE GLOBE-TROTTER

Abraham ibn Ezra, the hero of this story, was born in Spain (1092) and lived there a great part of his life. After his many travels, that included France, England, Italy, North Africa, Asia Minor, Palestine and Persia, he returned to Spain and died there in the year 1167. Though he was a poet, his greatest fame has been won through his commentaries on the Bible. He was also an expert grammarian, and made many contributions toward the advancement of Hebrew grammar. His versatility is indicated by his books on astronomy, geography and algebra. His mind was one of the most critical in all Jewish history.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 95-101; Deutsch: p. 49; Goodman: p. 75; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 366-375; Magnus: pp. 195-6; Meyer: pp. 59; 85-86; Harris: pp. 113-116. Jewish Encyclopedia.

IN THE NAME OF GOD

The Crusades in Europe began in 1096 when Peter the Hermit returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and, before crowds of people in various Christian countries,

told of the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks against Christian pilgrims and of their wanton destruction at the Holy Sepulchre. The object of the Crusades was to restore the Holy Land to Christian hands.

There were altogether a series of Seven Crusades during the period beginning with 1096 and continuing for approximately 200 years, without the goal being achieved. The crusaders followed various routes through many countries on their way to the Mediterranean and then to Jerusalem. They committed tremendous excesses against the Jew. In some instances, Christians themselves found it necessary to attack and disperse unruly mobs of crusaders passing through their lands. This story centers about one of these massacres of the Jewish population.

REFERENCES

Deutsch: pp. 47-48; Goodman: pp. 81-92; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 298-497; Harris: pp. 120-9; Magnus: pp. 150-165; Meyer: pp. 95-101; Van Loon: The History of Mankind, pp. 168-173; Wells: Outline of History, pp. 75-84.

IN THE YEAR OF FLYING

Throughout Jewish history, there have arisen men who played the rôle of Messiah and claimed to be the anointed Davidic descendant, whose coming the Jews had always expected. David Alroy lived at a time (12th century) when conditions were favorable for the successful promotion of such claims, although not as favorable as they were in a later century for Sabbathai Zevi. In the instance of Alroy, the Crusades and their goal were sufficient to stir his imagination and to suggest his role.

REFERENCES

Benjamin Disraeli: Alroy (a novel); Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 430-433; Harris: pp. 258-260; Hyamson: Palestine, the Rebirth of an Ancient People: pp. 159-162, 168.

WHY A RICH MAN WENT HUNGRY

This story has no historic background, but it does reflect the Jewish attitude and mind. For supplementary facts concerning the life of medieval Jewry, see list of references.

REFERENCES

Israel Abrahams: Jewish Life in the Middle Ages, pp. 211-260; Goodman: pp. 81-89; Magnus: pp. 150-6.

THE RABBI AND THE BISHOP

Rashi, or Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki, lived in France (1040-1105). He is one of the greatest of the Jewish commentators. His commentary on the Bible was translated into Latin and used by the Christian schools of Europe for several centuries. Luther was greatly indebted to it in his German translation of the Bible. Rashi also prepared a commentary on the Talmud. Both of these commentaries are still very popular among Jews. His three grandsons became very famous Talmudic scholars, following in his footsteps.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 129-140; Deutsch: p. 51; Goodman: pp. 78-80; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 282-346; Maurice Liber: Rashi (a biography); Harris: pp. 130-139; 140-6; Magnus: pp. 193-5; Meyer: pp. 83-5. Jewish Encyclopedia.

A PHYSICIAN AND HIS PEN OF TRUTH

Moses Maimonides represents one of the outstanding minds in the history of the Jew and Judaism. His knowledge covered a very wide range, and his versatile pen included the Arabic tongue as well as the Hebrew. His Hebrew style is one of unusual excellence. His influence reached into the worlds of Mohammedanism and Christianity. Many of his works were translated into Latin and so read by Christian scholars. His "Guide to The Perplexed," the *Moreh Nebuchim,* was originally written in Arabic, because of his residence in Egypt. It was translated into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon, and then into Latin. It is now available in an English translation.

Maimonides was born in the year 1135 in the city of Cordova, Spain, leaving it at the age of thirteen. He wandered with his father, settling in Fez, Morocco, in 1160. In 1165, the family sailed for Palestine, and in that same year settled in Egypt. His "Guide to The Perplexed" was finished in the year 1190. His remarkable life came to an end in the year 1204.

Among many other writings, Maimonides has achieved popular fame through his "Thirteen Articles of Belief," which were formulated in answer to the creeds of Christianity and Mohammedanism.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 103-117; Deutsch: pp. 50-1; Goodman: pp. 75-78; 103-105; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 446-582; Harris: pp. 178-205; Magnus: pp. 204-215; Meyer: pp. 69-72; Yellin and Abrahams: Maimonides (a biography); Field: Jewish Legends of Middle Ages, pp. 36-50. Jewish Encyclopedia.

THE JEW SPEAKS

Nachmanides, or Moses ben Nachman, also lived in Spain, having been born near the city of Barcelona in the year 1200. Like Judah Halevi, he died in the Holy Land in the year 1270, an exile, surrounded by his disciples. He was opposed to the rationalistic point of view of Maimonides, being a mystic in his religious life and thought.

During his life, the Christian intolerance toward the Jew in Spain was gaining considerable momentum. The Church had established a system of inquisition, whose purpose it was to root out all forms of heresy. Judaism was challenged concerning the nature of Christian references in its Talmud and other literature. Its teachers were led into public disputations concerning the doctrines of the two faiths, Judaism and Christianity. This story affords an instance of the many trials to which the Jew and his leaders were subjected. The courage of a Judah Maccabee, an Akiba and a Samuel ben Adijah is evident in every attitude of this wonderful and beloved teacher, Nachmanides.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 118-128; Deutsch: pp. 58, 66; Goodman: p. 105; Graetz: Vol. 3, pp. 531-609; Harris: pp. 214-222; Meyer: pp. 86-7; 144-5. Jewish Encyclopedia.

THE RABBI IN THE PRISON TOWER

One of the most painful and tragic developments in Jewish history was the fabrication of the blood-accusation and the ritual murder charge against the Jew. The

blood accusation contended that the Jews killed Christians with no definite purpose in view. The ritual murder charge maintained that the Jews used the blood of Christian children in the making of the unleavened cakes, the *Matzoth*, for the Passover.

The first ritual murder charge was made in Fulda, Germany, in the year 1235. Blood-accusations had preceded it. The more recent ritual murder charges were those in Tisza-Ezlar, Hungary, in 1882; in Xanten, Germany, in 1891, and in Polna, Bohemia, in 1900. The most recent of all was that directed against Mendel Beilis of Russia, in 1911. It is interesting to note that the decision in the case of Beilis was practically similar to that in the case of Israel Bruna. Beilis was freed, but the Russian Court asserted that ritual murder had taken place. Bruna lived during the period of 1400 to 1480.

REFERENCES

Deutsch: pp. 47, 53, 56, 61, 78-9, 98; G. Deutsch: Israel Bruna (a play); Graetz: Vol. 4, pp. 301-4; Hearst's International: Vol. XLI, No. 6, p. 128 (June, 1922.)

WITH A SONG ON THEIR LIPS

Though the Jews had suffered occasional persecution at the hands of the Mohammedans, their fortunes were more promising under the dominion of these rulers. Gradually, one province after another in the Spanish peninsula passed into Christian hands, and in 1491 the last Mohammedan stronghold, Granada, fell before its Christian besiegers. The Mohammedan Moor and all

his host were driven out of Spain. The Jew's hopes fell with the conquest of Granada.

Another factor that was fateful to the Jews was the great group of Marano converts. It was to ferret out these half-hearted converts to Christianity that the Inquisition was inaugurated. Its worst features date from September 17th, 1480, when the Court of Inquisition, in all its thoroughness, was set up by royal decree. Failing in their purposes, the inquisitors demanded that all unconverted Jews be expelled, so as to rid Spain of the influence of loyal Jews on the faith of the Maranos. Still another purpose in the expulsion was to gain whatever wealth and property some of the Jews possessed.

Don Isaac Abarbanel settled in Venice, where he died in the year 1508. Venice was not under papal control, as many parts of the Italian peninsula were, and so some of the Jews of Spain found a haven there. His family attained similar fame in this new land of refuge for the Jew.

To this day, only a handful of Jews have lived in Spain, though recent overtures for their resettlement have been made by King Alfonso.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 174-194; Deutsch: pp. 60-61; Goodman: pp. 97-103; Graetz: Vol. 4, pp. 308-356; Harris: pp. 332-352; Magnus: pp. 139-150; Meyer: pp. 141-150; Field: Jewish Legends of Middle Ages, pp. 140-152.

HOW COLUMBUS DISCOVERED AMERICA

One of the very helpful investigations into the period of Columbus' discoveries has been made by the Jewish

historian, Kayserling. The question of Columbus' descent is still undecided, though many Spanish scholars of today have claimed to verify the assertion of his Jewish descent.

It is conceded, however, that Jews, and not the jewels of Queen Isabella, made possible the journey of Columbus. They assisted in both men and money.

REFERENCES

Bildersee: pp. 185-6; Goodman: p. 122; Harris: pp. 362-370; Kayserling: Christopher Columbus; Elma E. Levinger: The New Land, pp. 9-13; Van Loon: pp. 224-240.

J Max Weis

GREAT MEN IN ISRAEL

J Max Weis
AUTHOR
GREAT MEN IN ISRAEL
TITLE

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME